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CONVERSATIONS OF GOETHE

WITH

ECKERMANN AND SORET.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

By JOHN OXENFORD.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

227175
20.11.78.

LONDON:

SMITH, ELDER & CO., 65, CORNHILL.

1850.



LONDON:
PRINTED BY STEWART AND MUREAY,
OLD BAILEY.

CONVERSATIONS OF GOETHE.

1827 (*continued*).

CONVERSATIONS OF GOETHE

(continued) 1881

1827.

(Sup.) Wednesday, September 26, 1827

GOETHE had invited me to take a drive this morning to the Hottelstędt Ecke, the most western summit of the Ettersberg, and thence to the Ettersburg hunting lodge. The day was very fine, and we drove early out of the Jacob's gate. Behind Lützendorf, where the journey was up-hill, and we could only drive leisurely, we had an opportunity for various observations. Goethe observed in the hedges a number of birds, and asked me if they were larks. Thou great and beloved one, thought I, though thou hast investigated nature as few others have, in ornithology thou appearest a mere child.

"These are yellow-hammers and sparrows," returned I, "and some late *gras-mücken*,* which, after moulting, come from the thicket of the Ettersberg down to the gardens and fields, and prepare for their migration; but there are no larks. It is not in the nature of larks to settle upon bushes. The field or sky-larks, rise upwards into the air, and dart down again to the earth; they also, in the autumn, fly through the air in flocks, and settle themselves some-

* A kind of small singing bird.—*Trans.*

where in a stubble-field ; but they do not settle upon hedges and bushes. The tree-lark, on the contrary, lives on the summit of high trees, whence it rises singing into the air, and then drops down again to its tree-top. There is still another lark, which is found in woodland glades, and which has a soft, flute-like, but rather melancholy song. It is not found on the Ettersberg, which is too lively, and too near the dwellings of man ; neither does it perch upon bushes."

"Humph!" said Goethe, "you appear to be no novice in these things."

"I have pursued the subject with ardour from my youth," returned I, "and have always had my eyes and ears open to it. In the whole wood of the Ettersberg, there are few spots through which I have not repeatedly rambled. Now, when I hear any note, I can venture to say from what bird it proceeds. I have also gone so far that, if any one brings me a bird that has lost its feathers in captivity through bad treatment, I will undertake very soon to restore it to health and full feather."

"That certainly shews," returned Goethe, "that you have already made much progress in these matters ; I would advise you to pursue the study earnestly ; it must, with your decided inclination, lead to very good results. But tell me something about moulting. You just now spoke of *gras-mücken*, which, after the completion of their moulting, come down into the fields from the thickets of the Ettersberg. Is moulting, then, confined to a certain time, and do all birds moult at once?"

"Most birds," returned I, "commence at the end

of the breeding season; that is to say, as soon as the young of the last brood are so far advanced as to be able to take care of themselves. But now the question is, whether the bird has time to moult between this period and that of its migration? If it has, it moults, and migrates with fresh feathers; but if it has not, it migrates with its old feathers, and moults later, in the warm south. Birds do not all return to us at the same time in the spring; neither do they migrate at the same time in the autumn. And this proceeds from the circumstance that some are less affected by cold and rough weather, and can bear it better than others. But a bird which comes to us early migrates late, and a bird which comes to us late migrates early.

“Thus, even amongst the *gras-mücken*, though they belong to one class, there is a great difference. The chattering *gras-mücke*, or the *müller-chen*,* are heard at the end of March; a fortnight after comes the black-headed one, or the monk (*Mönch*); then, a week afterwards, the nightingale; and quite at the end of April, or the beginning of May, the grey one. All these birds moult in August with us, as well as the young of the first brood; wherefore, at the end of August, young monks are caught, which have already black heads. The young of the last brood, however, migrate with their first feathers, and moult later in the southern countries, for which reason young monks are caught at the beginning of September, especially young male birds, which have red heads like their mother.”

* Literally, “little miller.”—*Trans.*

"Is, then," asked Goethe, "the grey *gras-mücke* the latest bird that returns to us, or are there others later?"

"The so-called yellow *spott-vogel* (mocking-bird), and the magnificent golden *pirol* (yellow thrush)," returned I, "do not appear till about Whitsuntide. Both migrate in the middle of August, after the breeding season, and moult, with their young, in the south. If they are kept in cages, they moult with us in the winter; on which account they are very difficult to rear. They require much warmth, yet if we hang them near the stove they pine from the want of fresh air; while if, on the contrary, we place them near the window, they pine in the cold of the long nights."

"It is supposed, then," said Goethe, "that moulting is a disease, or at least is attended by bodily weakness."

"I would not say that," said I. "It is a state of increased productiveness, which is gone through without difficulty in the open air, and with somewhat strong birds perfectly well in a room. I have had *gras-mücken* which have not ceased singing during their moulting, a sign that they were thoroughly well. But if a bird kept in a room appears at all sickly during its moulting, it may be concluded that it has not been properly treated, with respect either to food, water, or fresh air. If, in the course of time, a bird kept in a room has grown so weak from want of air and freedom, that it has not the productive power to moult, and if it is then taken into the fruitful, fresh air, the moulting will go on as well as possible. With a

bird at liberty, on the other hand, it passes off so gently and gradually that it is scarcely felt."

"But, still, you just now seemed to hint," added Goethe, "that during their moulting the *gras-mücken* retire into the depths of the forest."

"During that time," returned I, "they certainly need shelter; and in this case nature proceeds with such wisdom and moderation, that a bird during its moulting never loses so many feathers at once as to render it incapable of flying sufficiently to reach its food. But it may still happen that it loses, for instance, at the same time the fourth, fifth, and sixth principal feathers of the left wing, and the fourth, fifth, and sixth feathers of the right one, so that, although it can still fly very well, it cannot fly well enough to escape from the pursuing birds of prey—especially the swift and active tree falcon—and then a bushy thicket is very useful."

"Good," returned Goethe. "But," continued he, "does the moulting take place in both wings equally and symmetrically?"

"As far as my observation extends, quite so," returned I; "and that is very beneficial. For if a bird lost, for instance, three principal feathers from the left wing and not so many from the right, the wings would be without equilibrium, and the bird would have no proper control over itself or its movements. It would be like a ship, the sails of which are too heavy on one side and too light on the other."

"I see," returned Goethe, "we may penetrate into nature on whatever side we please, and always come to some wisdom."

We were, meantime, continually going up-hill, and were now on the edge of a pine wood. We came to a place where some stones had been broken, and lay in a heap. Goethe ordered the coachman to stop, and begged me to alight and see if I could discover any petrifications. I found some shells, and also some broken ammonites, which I handed to him when I again took my seat. We drove on.

“Always the old story,” said Goethe; “always the old bed of the sea! When one looks down from this height upon Weimar, and upon the numerous villages around, it appears wonderful when one thinks that there was a time when whales sported in the broad valley below. And yet there was such a time—at least it is highly probable. But the mew that flew over the sea which then covered this mountain certainly never thought that we two should drive here to-day. And who knows whether, in some thousands of years, the mew may not again fly over this mountain.”

We were now upon the height, and drove quickly along. On our right were oaks, beeches, and other leafy trees: Weimar was behind us, but out of sight. We had reached the western height;—the broad valley of the Unstrut with many villages and small towns, lay before us, in the clearest morning sun.

“This is a good resting-place,” said Goethe, as he ordered the coachman to stop. “I think we may as well try how a little breakfast would suit us in this good air.”

We alighted, and walked up and down for a few minutes upon the dry earth, at the foot of some half-grown oaks, stunted by many storms, whilst Frederick

unpacked the breakfast we had brought with us, and spread it upon a turfy hillock. The view from this spot, in the clear morning light of the autumn sun, was truly magnificent. On the south and south-west, we saw the whole range of the Thuringer-wald mountains; on the west, beyond Erfurt, the towering Castle Gotha and the Inselsberg; farther north, the mountains behind Langensalza and Mühlhausen, until the view was bounded on the north by the blue Hartz Mountains. I thought of the verses—

“Far, high, splendid the view,
Around into life!
From mountain to mountain,
Soars the eternal spirit,
Presaging endless life.”

We seated ourselves with our backs against the oak; so that, during breakfast, we had constantly before us the extensive view over half Thuringia. In the mean while we demolished a brace of roast partridges, with new white bread, and drank a flask of very good wine, out of a cup of pure gold which Goethe always carried with him on such excursions in a yellow leather case.

“I have very often been in this spot,” said he, “and of late years I have often thought it would be the last time that I should look down hence on the kingdoms of the world, and their glories; but it has happened still once again, and I hope that even this is not the last time that we shall both spend a pleasant day here. We will, for the future, often come hither. One shrinks in the narrow confinement of the house. Here one feels great and free, as the great nature

which one has before one's eyes, and as one ought, properly, always to be."

"From this spot," continued Goethe, "I look down upon many points which are bound up with the richest recollections of a long life. What have I not, in my youth, gone through yonder in the mountains of Ilmenau? Then, how many adventures have I had down below there, in dear Erfurt! In early times, too, I often liked to be at Gotha; but for many years I have scarcely been there at all."

"Since I have been in Weimar," remarked I, "I do not recollect you going there."

"There is a reason for that," returned Goethe, laughing, "I am not in the best favour there. I will tell you the story. When the mother of the present ruler was in the bloom of youth, I was very often there. I was sitting one evening alone with her at the tea-table, when the two princes, of ten and twelve years of age, two pretty, fair-haired boys, burst in and came to the table. With great audacity, I put a hand through the hair of each prince, with the words—'*Now, you floury heads, what do you want?*' The boys stared in the greatest astonishment at my boldness, and they have never forgotten the affair! I will not boast of it now; but so it was, and it lay deep in my nature. I never had much respect for mere princely rank as such, when there was not behind it sound human nature, and sound human worth. Nay, I felt so satisfied with myself, that if I had been made a prince I should not have thought the change so very remarkable. When the diploma of nobility was given me, many thought

that I should feel elevated by it ; but, between ourselves, it was nothing to me—really nothing ! We Frankfort patricians always considered ourselves equal to the nobility ; and when I held the diploma in my hands I had nothing more, in my own opinion, than I had possessed long ago.”

We took another good draught from the golden cup, and then drove round the northern side of the Ettersberg to the Ettersburg hunting-lodge. Goethe had all the chambers opened, which were hung with beautiful tapestry and pictures. He told me that Schiller had for some time inhabited the chamber at the western angle of the first storey.

“ In early times,” continued he, “ we have here spent many a good day, and wasted many a good day. We were all young and wanton : in the summer we had impromptu comedies, and in the winter many a dance and sledge-race by torch-light.”

We returned into the open air, and Goethe led me, in a westerly direction, along a footpath into the wood.

“ I will show you the beech,” said he, “ on which we cut our names fifty years ago. But how it has altered, and how everything has grown ! That must be the tree ; you see that it is still in the fullest vigour. Even our names are still to be traced ; but they are so confused and distorted that they are scarcely to be made out. This beech then stood upon a dry, open spot. It was quite sunny and pleasant around it, and here, in the beautiful summer evenings, we played our impromptu farces. Now the spot is damp and cheerless. What were then only low bushes have now

grown up into shady trees, so that one can scarcely distinguish in the thicket the magnificent beech of one's youth."

We returned to the lodge, and after we had seen the tolerably rich collection of arms, we drove back to Weimar.

(Sup.) Thursday, September 27, 1827.

This afternoon spent a short time with Goethe, when I made the acquaintance of Privy-councillor Streckfuss, of Berlin, who had taken a drive with him in the forenoon, and had then stayed to dinner. When Streckfuss went, I accompanied him, and took a walk through the park. On my return across the market-place, I met the Chancellor and Raupach, with whom I went into the "Elephant." In the evening I returned to Goethe, who talked with me about a new number of "Kunst und Alterthum" (Art and Antiquity), and also about a dozen pencil-drawings, in which the brothers Riepenhausen endeavoured to represent the painting of Polygnotus, in the Lesche at Delphi, according to the description of Pausanias, an attempt which Goethe could not sufficiently praise.

(Sup.) Monday, October 1, 1827.

At the theatre, "Das Bild" (the Picture), by Houwald. I saw two acts, and then went to Goethe, who read to me the second scene of his new Faust.

"In the emperor," said he, "I have endeavoured to represent a prince who has all the necessary qualities for losing his land, and at last succeeds in so doing.

"He does not concern himself about the welfare of his kingdom and his subjects; he only thinks of himself,

and how he can amuse himself from day to day with something new. The land is without law and justice ; the judge himself is on the side of the criminals ; the most atrocious crimes are committed without check and with impunity. The army is without pay, without discipline, and roams about plundering, in order to provide its own pay, and help itself as it can. The state treasury is without money, and without hope of replenishment. In the emperor's own household, things are no better ; there is scarcity both in kitchen and cellar. The marshal, who cannot devise means how to get on from day to day, is already in the hands of usurious Jews, to whom everything is pawned, so that bread already eaten comes to the emperor's table.

“ The counsellor of state wishes to remonstrate with his Majesty upon all these evils, and advises as to their remedy ; but the gracious sovereign is very unwilling to lend his sublime ear to anything so disagreeable ; he prefers amusing himself. Here now is the true element for Mephisto, who quickly supplants the former fool, and is at once at the side of the emperor as new fool and counsellor.”

Goethe read the scene and the interspersed murmuring of the crowd excellently, and I had a very pleasant evening.

(Sup.) Sunday, October 7, 1827.

This morning, the weather being very beautiful, I found myself in the chariot with Goethe before eight o'clock, and on the road to Jena, where he intended to stay until the next evening.

Having arrived there early, we first called at the botanical garden, where Goethe surveyed all the shrubs

and plants, and found them all thriving and in beautiful order. We also looked over the mineralogical cabinets, and some other collections of natural objects, and then drove to Herr von Knebel's, who expected us to dinner.

Knebel, who had attained a great age, almost stumbled towards Goethe at the door, to fold him in his arms. At dinner all were very lively and hearty, although there was no conversation of any importance. The two old friends were quite enough occupied with the pleasure of their friendly meeting. After dinner we took a drive in a southerly direction, up the Saale. I had known this charming region in earlier times, but everything appeared as fresh as if I had never seen it before.

When we returned into the streets of Jena, Goethe gave orders to drive along a brook, and to stop at a house the external appearance of which was not very striking.

"This was the dwelling of Voss," said he, "and I will conduct you on this classic ground." We walked through the house, and entered the garden. There were but few traces of flowers and the finer species of culture ; we walked on the turf completely under fruit trees.

"This was something for Ernestine," said Goethe, "who could not even here forget her excellent Eutiner apples, which she praised to me as incomparable. But they were the apples of her childhood, there was the charm ! I have spent many pleasant evenings here with Voss and his excellent Ernestine, and I still like to think of the old time. Such a man as Voss will not soon come again. There are few who have had

such influence as he upon the higher German culture. With him everything was sound and solid; and on this account he had no artificial, but a purely natural relation to the Greeks, which produced the noblest fruits for us. One who is so penetrated with his worth as I am scarcely knows how to honour his memory sufficiently."

It was by this time about six o'clock, and Goethe considered it time to go to our night quarters, which he had bespoken at the "Bear."

We were accommodated with a roomy chamber, together with an alcove containing two beds. The sun had not long set—the evening light reposed upon our windows, and it was pleasant to sit for some time without a candle.

Goethe brought the conversation back to Voss. "He was very valuable to me," said he, "and I would willingly have retained him for the University and myself; but the advantages offered from Heidelberg were too important for us, with our limited means, to be able to outweigh them. I was obliged, with mournful resignation, to let him go. It was, however, fortunate for me at that time," continued Goethe, "that I had Schiller; for, different as our natures were, our tendencies were still towards one point, which made our connection so intimate that one really could not live without the other."

Goethe related me some anecdotes of his friend, which appeared to me very characteristic.

"Schiller was, as you may imagine from his high character," said he, "a decided enemy to all the hollow reverence, and all the vain idolatry, which

people paid him, or wished to pay him. When Kotzebue proposed to get up a public demonstration in his house, it was so distasteful to him that he was almost ill with inward disgust. It was also repulsive to him when a stranger was announced. If he were hindered for a moment from seeing him, and made an appointment for four o'clock in the afternoon, it generally happened that at the appointed hour he was ill from mere apprehension. On these occasions he could now and then be very impatient, and sometimes even rude. I was witness of his impetuous conduct towards a foreign surgeon, who entered unannounced to pay him a visit. The poor man, quite put out of countenance, did not know how he could retreat rapidly enough.

"However, as I have said, and as we all know," continued Goethe, "we were, in spite of the similarity of our tendencies, very different in our natures, and that not merely in mental but also in physical matters. An air that was beneficial to Schiller acted on me like poison. I called on him one day, and as I did not find him at home, and his wife told me that he would soon return, I seated myself at his work-table to note down various matters. I had not been seated long before I felt a strange indisposition steal over me, which gradually increased, until at last I nearly fainted. At first I did not know to what cause I should ascribe this wretched and, to me, unusual state, until I discovered that a dreadful odour issued from a drawer near me. When I opened it, I found to my astonishment that it was full of rotten apples. I immediately went to the window

and inhaled the fresh air, by which I felt myself instantly restored. In the mean time his wife had re-entered, and told me that the drawer was always filled with rotten apples, because the scent was beneficial to Schiller, and he could not live or work without it."

"To-morrow morning," continued Goethe, "I will also show you where Schiller lived in Jena."

In the mean time lights were brought in; we took a little supper, and afterwards sat for a little time engaged in various conversations and recollections.

I related to Goethe a wonderful dream of my boyish years, which was literally fulfilled the next morning.

"I had," said I, "brought up three young linnets, to which I devoted my whole heart, and which I loved above all things. They flew freely about my chamber, and came towards me and settled on my hand as soon as I entered at the door. One day at noon, I had the misfortune, that, on my entrance into the chamber, one of the birds flew over me, out of the house—I knew not whither. I sought it the whole afternoon, on all the roofs, and was inconsolable when evening came and I had discovered no traces of it. I went to sleep with sad thoughts in my heart, and towards morning I had the following dream:—Methought I roamed about the neighbouring houses in search of my lost bird. All at once I heard the sound of its voice, and saw it behind the garden of our cottage, seated upon the roof of a neighbour's house. I called to it, and it approached me, moved its wings towards me as if asking for food, but still it could not venture to fly down to my hand. I ran quickly through our garden

into my chamber, and returned with the cup of soaked rape seed ; I held the favourite food towards it, and it perched upon my hand, when, full of joy, I carried it back into my chamber to the other two.

“ With this dream I awoke ; and as it was then broad daylight, I quickly put on my clothes, and with the utmost haste ran down through our little garden to the house where I had seen the bird. But how great was my astonishment when the bird was really there ! Everything happened literally as I had seen it in the dream. I called the bird, it approached, but it hesitated to fly to my hand. I ran back and brought the food, when it flew upon my hand, and I took it back to the others.”

“ This boyish adventure of yours,” said Goethe, “ is certainly very remarkable. But there are many such things in nature, though we have not the right key to them. We all walk in mysteries. We are surrounded by an atmosphere of which we do not know what is stirring in it, or how it is connected with our own spirit. So much is certain,—that in particular cases we can put out the feelers of our soul beyond its bodily limits, and that a presentiment, nay, an actual insight into the immediate future, is accorded to it.”

“ I have lately experienced something similar,” returned I. “ As I was returning from a walk along the Erfurt road, about ten minutes before I reached Weimar, I had the mental impression that a person whom I had not seen, and of whom I had not even thought for a length of time, would meet me at the corner of the theatre. It troubled me to think that this person might meet me, and great

was my surprise when, as I was about to turn the corner, this very person actually met me, in the same place which I had seen in my imagination ten minutes before."

"That is also very wonderful, and more than chance," returned Goethe. "As I said, we are all groping among mysteries and wonders. Besides, one soul may have a decided influence upon another, merely by means of its silent presence, of which I could relate many instances. It has often happened to me that, when I have been walking with an acquaintance, and have had a living image of something in my mind, he has at once begun to speak of that very thing. I have also known a man who, without saying a word, could suddenly silence a party engaged in cheerful conversation, by the mere power of his mind. Nay, he could also introduce a tone which would make everybody feel uncomfortable. We have all something of electrical and magnetic forces within us, and we put forth, like the magnet itself, an attractive or repulsive power, accordingly as we come in contact with something similar or dissimilar. It is possible, nay, even probable, that if a young girl were, without knowing it, to find herself in a dark chamber with a man who designed to murder her, she would have an uneasy sense of his unknown presence, and that an anguish would come over her, which would drive her from the room to the rest of the household."

"I know a scene in an opera," returned I, "in which two lovers, who have long been separated by a great distance, find themselves together in a dark

room without knowing it; but they do not remain long together before the magnetic power begins to work; one feels the proximity of the other—they are involuntarily attracted towards each other—and it is not long before the young girl is clasped in the arms of the youth.”

“With lovers,” answered Goethe, “this magnetic power is particularly strong, and acts even at a distance. In my younger days I have experienced cases enough, when, during solitary walks, I have felt a great desire for the company of a beloved girl, and have thought of her till she has really come to meet me. ‘I was so restless in my room,’ she has said, ‘that I could not help coming here.’

“I recollect an instance during the first years of my residence here, where I soon fell in love again. I had taken a long journey, and had returned some days; but, being detained late at night by court affairs, I had not been able to visit my mistress; besides, our mutual affection had already attracted attention, and I was afraid to pay my visits by day, lest I should increase the common talk. On the fourth or fifth evening, however, I could resist no longer, and I was on the road to her, and stood before her house, before I had thought of it. I went softly up-stairs, and was upon the point of entering her room, when I heard, by the different voices, that she was not alone. I went down again unnoticed, and was quickly in the dark streets, which at that time were not lighted. In an impassioned and angry mood I roamed about the town in all directions, for about an hour, and passed the house once more, full of passionate thoughts

of my beloved. At last I was on the point of returning to my solitary room, when I once more went past her house, and remarked that she had no light. 'She must have gone out,' said I, to myself, 'but whither, in this dark night? and where shall I meet her?' I afterwards went through many streets—I met many people, and was often deceived, inasmuch as I often fancied I saw her form and size; but, on nearer approach invariably found that it was not she. I then firmly believed in a strong mutual influence, and that I could attract her to me by a strong desire. I also believed myself surrounded by invisible beings of a higher order, whom I entreated to direct her steps to me, or mine to her. 'But what a fool thou art!' I then said to myself; 'thou wilt not seek her and go to her again, and yet thou desirest signs and wonders!'

"In the mean time I had gone down the esplanade, and had reached the small house in which Schiller afterwards lived, when it occurred to me to turn back towards the palace, and then go down a little street to the right. I had scarcely taken a hundred steps in this direction, when I saw a female form coming towards me which perfectly resembled her I expected. The street was faintly lighted by the weak rays which now and then shone from a window, and since I had been already often deceived in the course of the evening with an apparent resemblance, I did not feel courage to speak to her in doubt. We passed quite close to each other, so that our arms touched. I stood still and looked about me; she did the same. 'Is it you?' said she, and I recognised her beloved voice. 'At last!' said I, and was enraptured even

to tears. Our hands clasped each other. 'Now,' said I, 'my hopes have not deceived me; I have sought you with the greatest eagerness; my feelings told me that I should certainly find you; now I am happy, and I thank God that my forebodings have proved true.' 'But, you wicked one!' said she, 'why did you not come? I heard to-day, by chance, that you had been back three days, and I have wept the whole afternoon, because I thought you had forgotten me. Then, an hour ago, I was seized with a longing and uneasiness on your account, such as I cannot describe. There were two female friends with me, whose visit appeared interminable. At last, when they were gone, I involuntarily seized my hat and cloak, and was impelled to go out into the air and darkness, I knew not whither; you were constantly in my mind, and I could not help thinking that I should meet you.' Whilst she thus spoke truly from her heart, we still held each other's hands, and pressed them, and gave each other to understand that absence had not cooled our love. I accompanied her to her door, and into the house. She went up the dark stairs before me, holding my hand and drawing me after her. My happiness was indescribable; both because I at last saw her again, and also because my belief had not deceived me, and I had not been deluded in my sense of an invisible influence."

Goethe was in a most amiable mood; I could have listened to him for hours; but he seemed to be gradually growing tired, and so we very soon went to bed in our alcove.

(Sup.) Jena, Monday, October 8, 1827.

We arose early. Whilst we were dressing, Goethe related to me a dream of the previous night, in which he imagined himself at Göttingen, where he had various pleasant conversations with the professors of his acquaintance.

We drank a few cups of coffee, and then drove to the building which contains a collection of natural objects. We saw the anatomical cabinet, various skeletons of animals, modern and primeval, as well as skeletons of men of former ages, on which Goethe remarked that their teeth showed them to have been a very moral race. We then drove to the observatory, where Doctor Schrön showed and explained to us the most important instruments. We also examined the adjacent meteorological cabinet with great interest, and Goethe praised Dr. Schrön, on account of the great order which prevailed in all these things.

We then went down into the garden, where Goethe had caused a little breakfast to be laid out upon a stone table in an arbour. "You scarcely know," said Goethe, "in what a remarkable place we are now seated. Here it was that Schiller dwelt. In this arbour, upon these benches, which are now almost broken, we have often sat, at this old stone table, and have exchanged many good and great words. He was then in the thirties, I in the forties; both were full of aspirations, and indeed it was something. Everything passes away; I am no more what I was; but the old earth still remains, and air, water, and land, are still the same.

“Afterwards you shall go up-stairs with Schrön, who will show you the room in the *mansarde*, which Schiller occupied.”

In the mean time we relished our breakfast very much in this pleasant air, and on this delightful spot. Schiller was present, at least in our minds ; and Goethe devoted to him many kind words of affectionate remembrance.

I then went with Schrön to the *mansarde*, and enjoyed the magnificent prospect from Schiller’s windows. The direction was due south, so that one might see the beautiful stream, interrupted by thickets and windings, flowing along for miles. There was also a wide expanse of sky. One could admirably observe the rising and setting of the planets ; and it could not be denied that this locality was very favourable for the conception of the astronomical and astrological part of Wallenstein.

I returned to Goethe, who drove to Hofrath Döbereiner ; whom he highly esteems, and who showed him some new chemical experiments.

It was by this time noon. We were again seated in the carriage.

“I think,” said Goethe, “we will not return to ‘The Bear,’ to dinner ; but will enjoy the splendid day in the open air. I think we will go to Burgau. We have wine with us, and, in any case, we shall find there some good fish, which can be either boiled or broiled.”

We did so, and the plan proved splendid. We drove along the bank of the Saale, by the thickets and the windings, the pleasantest way, as I had

already seen from Schiller's *mansarde*. We were soon in Burgau. We alighted at the little inn near the river, and the bridge, where there is a crossing to Lobeda, a little town which was close before our eyes across the meadows.

At the little inn we found all as Goethe had said. The hostess apologised for having nothing prepared ; but said we should have some soup and some good fish.

In the mean time we walked in the sunshine, up and down the bridge, amusing ourselves by looking at the river, which was animated by raftmen, who, upon planks of pine-wood bound together, glided under the bridge from time to time, and were very noisy and merry over their troublesome, wet occupation.

We ate our fish in the open air, and then remained sitting over a little wine, and had all sorts of pleasant conversation. A small hawk flew past, which in its flight and its form bore a strong resemblance to the cuckoo.

"There was a time," said Goethe, "when the study of natural history was so much behind-hand that the opinion was universally spread that the cuckoo was a cuckoo only in summer, but in winter a bird of prey."

"This opinion still exists amongst the people," returned I. "And it is also laid to the charge of this good bird, that as soon as it is full grown, it devours its own parents. It is, therefore, used as a simile of shameful ingratitude. I know people at the present moment who will not allow themselves to be talked out of these absurdities, and who cling to them as firmly as to any article of their Christian belief."

“As far as I know,” said Goethe, “the cuckoo is classed with the woodpecker.”

“That is sometimes done,” returned I, “probably because two of the toes of its weak feet have a backward inclination. I, however, should not so class it. For the woodpecker’s life it has neither the strong beak, capable of breaking the decayed bark of a tree, nor the sharp and very strong feathers in the tail, which are fit to support it during the operation. Its toes, also, want the sharp claws necessary to sustain it; and I, therefore, consider its small feet as not actually, but only apparently, made for climbing.”

“The ornithologists,” added Goethe, “are probably delighted when they have brought any peculiar bird under some head; but still, nature carries on her own free sport, without troubling herself with the classes marked out by limited men.”

“The nightingale, too,” continued I, “is numbered amongst the *gras-mücken*, whilst in the energy of its nature, its movements, and its mode of life, it bears far more resemblance to the thrush. But still, I would not class it among the thrushes. It is a bird between the two; a bird by itself, as the cuckoo is a bird by itself, with a strongly expressed individuality.”

“All that I have heard concerning the cuckoo,” said Goethe, “excites in me a great interest in this wonderful bird. It is of a highly problematical nature, a manifest mystery, but not the less difficult to interpret because it is so manifest. And with how many things do we not find ourselves in the same predicament? We stand in mere wonderment, and the best part of things is closed to us. Let us take the bees. We see them

fly for miles after honey, and always in a different direction. Now they fly westward for a week, to a field of blooming rape-seed ; then, for a long time, northward, to a blooming heath ; then in another direction to the blossom of the buckwheat ; then somewhere else, to a blooming clover-field ; and at last, in some other direction, to a blossoming lime. But who has said to them, ‘ Now fly thither, there is something for you ? ’ and ‘ now thither, there is something fresh ? ’ And who has led them back to their village and their cell ? They go hither and thither, as if in invisible leading-strings ; but what these really are we do not know. It is the same with the lark. She rises, singing, from a corn-field ; she soars over a sea of corn, which the wind blows backwards and forwards, and in which one wave looks like the other ; she then returns to her young, and drops down, without fail, upon the little spot where her nest is placed. All these outward things are as clear as the day to us ; but their inward, spiritual tie is concealed.”

“ With the cuckoo,” said I, “ it is not otherwise. We know that it does not brood itself, but lays its egg in the nest of some other bird. We know, furthermore, that it lays it in the nest of the *gras-mücke*, the yellow wagtail, the monk ; also in the nests of the braunelle, the robin, and the wren. This we know. We also know that these are all insect-eating birds ; and must be so, because the cuckoo itself is an insect-eating bird, and the young cuckoo cannot be brought up by a seed-eating bird. But how does the cuckoo find out that these are all actually insect-eating birds ? For all the above-mentioned birds differ extremely from

each other, both in form and colour ; and also in their song and their call-note. Further, how comes it that the cuckoo can trust its egg and its tender young to nests which are as different as possible with respect to structure, temperature, dryness, and moisture ? The nest of the *gras-mücke* is built so lightly, with dry hay and horse-hair, that all cold penetrates into it, and every breeze blows through it ; it is also open at the top, and without shelter ; still, the young cuckoo thrives in it excellently. The nest of the wren, on the other hand, is on the outside built firmly and thickly, with moss, straw, and leaves, and carefully lined within with all sorts of wool and feathers ; so that not a breeze can pierce through it. It is also covered at the top, and arched over, only a small aperture being left for the very small birds to slip in and out. One would think that in the hot days of June, the heat in such an enclosed hole must be suffocating ; but the young cuckoo thrives there best. Then how different is the nest of the yellow-wagtail. This bird lives by the water, by brooks, and in various damp places. It builds its nest upon damp commons, in a tuft of rushes. It scrapes a hole in the moist earth, and lines it scantily with some blades of grass, so that the young cuckoo is hatched, and must grow up in the damp and cold ; and still it thrives excellently. But what a bird this must be, to which, at the most tender age, varieties of heat and cold, dryness and damp, which would be fatal to any other bird, are indifferent. And how does the old cuckoo know that they are so, when it is so susceptible to damp and cold at an advanced age."

"This is a mystery," returned Goethe ; "but tell

me, if you have observed it, how the cuckoo places its egg in the nest of the wren, when this has so small an opening that she cannot enter, and sit upon it."

"The cuckoo lays it upon a dry spot," returned I, "and takes it to the nest with her beak. I believe, too, that she does this not only with the wren's nest, but with every other. For the nests of the other insect-eating birds, even when they are open at the top, are still so small or so closely surrounded by twigs, that the great long-tailed cuckoo, cannot sit upon them. This can well be imagined; but how it happens that the cuckoo lays so unusually small an egg, nay, so small that it might be the egg of a small insect-eating bird, is a new riddle which one may silently admire without being able to unravel. The egg of the cuckoo is only a little larger than that of the *gras-mücke*; and, indeed, it ought not to be larger, as it has to be hatched by the small insect-eating birds. This is good and rational; but that nature, to be wise in a particular instance, should deviate from a great pervading law, according to which there exists a certain proportion between the size of the egg and that of the bird, from the humming-bird to the ostrich, this arbitrary proceeding, I say, is enough to inspire us with astonishment."

"It certainly astonishes us," said Goethe, "because our point of view is too small for us to comprehend it. If more were revealed to us, we should probably find that these apparent deviations are really within the compass of the law. But go on, and tell me something

more. Is it known how many eggs the cuckoo lays?"

"Whoever tried to say anything definite on that point would be a great blockhead. The bird is very fleeting. She is now here, now there; there is never more than one of her eggs found in a single nest. She certainly lays several; but who knows where these are, and who could look for them? But, supposing that she lays five eggs, and that all these are properly hatched, and brought up by affectionate foster-parents, we must still wonder that nature can resolve to sacrifice at least fifty of the young of our best singing birds for five young cuckoos.

"In such things, as well as others," returned Goethe, "nature does not appear to be very scrupulous. She has a good fund of life to lavish, and she does so now and then without much hesitation. But how does it happen that so many young singing birds are lost for a single young cuckoo?"

"In the first place," I replied, "the first brood is generally lost; for even if it should happen that the eggs of the singing bird are hatched at the same time with that of the cuckoo, which is very probable, the parents are so much delighted with the larger bird, and show it such fondness, that they think of and feed that alone, whilst their own young are neglected, and vanish from the nest. Besides, the young cuckoo is always greedy, and demands as much nourishment as the little insect-eating birds can procure. It is a very long time before it attains its full size and plumage, and before it is capable of leaving the nest, and soaring to the top of a tree. And even long after it has flown, it requires

to be fed continually, so that the whole summer passes away, while the affectionate foster-parents constantly attend upon their great child, and do not think of a second brood. It is on this account that a single young cuckoo causes the loss of so many other young birds."

"That is very convincing," said Goethe. "But tell me, is the young cuckoo, as soon as it has flown, fed also by other birds which have not hatched it? I fancy I have heard something of the kind."

"It is so," answered I. "As soon as the young cuckoo has left its lower nest, and has taken its seat on the top of a tall oak, it utters a loud sound, which says that it is there. Then all the small birds in the neighbourhood, which have heard it, come up to greet it. The *gras-mücke* and the monk come, the yellow wagtail flies up, and even the wren, whose nature it is constantly to slip into low hedges and thick bushes, conquers its nature, and rises towards the beloved stranger to the top of the tall oak. But the pair which has reared it is more constant with food, whilst the rest only occasionally fly to it with a choice morsel."

"There also appears to be," said Goethe, "a great affection between the young cuckoo and the small insect-eating birds."

"The affection of the small insect-eating birds for the young cuckoo," returned I, "is so great, that if one approaches a nest in which there is a young cuckoo, the little foster-parents do not know how to contain themselves for terror and anxiety. The monk especially expresses the deepest despair, and flutters on the ground almost as if it were in convulsions."

"This is wonderful enough," returned Goethe;

“but it can be readily conceived. Still it appears very problematical to me, that a pair of *gras-mücken*, for instance, on the point of hatching their own eggs, should allow the old cuckoo to approach their nest, and lay her egg in it.”

“That is truly very enigmatical,” returned I; “but not quite inexplicable. For, from the very circumstance that all small insect-eating birds feed the cuckoo after it has flown, and that even those feed it which did not hatch it; from this circumstance, I say, arises a sort of affinity between the two, so that they continue to know each other, and to consider each other members of one large family. Indeed, it may happen that the same cuckoo which was hatched and reared by a pair of *gras-mücken* last year, may this year bring her egg to them.”

“There is something in that,” returned Goethe, “little as one can comprehend it. But it still appears to me a wonder, that the young cuckoo is fed by those birds which have neither hatched it nor reared it.”

“That is, indeed, a wonder,” returned I; “but still it is not without analogy. I foresee, in this inclination, a great law which pervades all nature.

“I had once caught a young linnet, which was too big to be fed by man, but still too young to eat by itself. I took a great deal of trouble about it for half a day; but as it would not eat anything at all, I placed it with an old linnet, a good singer, which I had kept for some time in a cage, and which hung outside my window. I thought to myself, if the young bird sees how the old one eats, perhaps it will go to its food and imitate it. However, it did not do so, but opened its

beak towards the old one, and fluttered its wings, uttering a beseeching cry ; whereupon the old linnet at once took compassion on it, and adopting it as a child, fed it as if it had been its own.

“ Afterwards, some one brought me a grey *gras-mücke* and three young ones, which I put together in a large cage, and which the old one fed. On the following day, some one brought me two young nightingales already fledged, which I put in with the *gras-mücke*, and which the mother bird likewise adopted and fed. Some days afterwards, I added a nest of young *müllerchen* nearly fledged, and then a nest with five young *plattmönchen*. The *gras-mücke* adopted all these and fed them, and tended them like a true mother. She had her beak always full of ant’s eggs, and was now in one corner of the roomy cage, and now in the other, so that whenever a hungry throat opened, there she was. Nay, still more. One of the young *gras-mücken*, which had grown up in the mean time, began to feed some of the less ones. This was, indeed, done in rather a playful, childish manner ; but still with a decided inclination to imitate the excellent mother.”

“ There is certainly something divine in this,” said Goethe, “ which creates in me a pleasing sense of wonder. If it were a fact that this feeding by strangers was an universal law of nature, it would unravel many enigmas, and one could say with certainty, that God pities the deserted young ravens that call upon him.”

“ It certainly appears to be an universal law,” returned I ; “ for I have observed this assistance in feeding, and this pity for the forlorn, even in a wild state.

“Last summer, in the neighbourhood of Tiefurt, I took two young wrens, which had probably only just left their nest, for they sat upon a bush on a twig with seven other young ones in a row, and the old bird was feeding them. I put the young birds in my silk pocket-handkerchief, and went towards Weimar, as far as the shooting house ; I then turned to the right towards the meadow, down along the Ilm, and passed the bathing-place, and then again to the left to the little wood. Here I thought I had a quiet spot to look once more at the wrens. But when I opened my handkerchief they both slipped out, and disappeared in the bushes and grass, so that I sought them in vain. Three days afterwards, I returned by chance to the same place, and hearing the note of a robin, guessed there was a nest in the neighbourhood, which, after looking about for some time, I really found. But how great was my astonishment, when I saw in this nest, besides some young robins nearly fledged, my two young wrens, which had established themselves very comfortably, and allowed themselves to be fed by the old robins. I was highly delighted at this very remarkable discovery. Since you are so cunning, thought I to myself, and have managed to help yourselves so nicely, and since the good robins have taken such care of you, I should be very sorry to destroy this hospitable intimacy ; on the contrary, I wish you the greatest possible prosperity.”

“That is one of the best ornithological stories I have ever heard,” said Goethe. “I drink success to you, and good luck to your investigations. Whoever hears that, and does not believe in God, will not

be aided by Moses and the prophets. That is what I call the omnipresence of the Deity, who has everywhere spread and implanted a portion of his endless love, and has intimated even in the brute as a germ, that which only blossoms to perfection in noble man. Continue your observations and your studies! You appear to be particularly successful with them, and may arrive at invaluable results."

Whilst we thus conversed on good and deep matters over our dinner in the open air, the sun had declined towards the summit of the western hills, and Goethe thought it time to retrace our steps. We drove quickly through Jena, and after we had settled our account at "The Bear," and had paid a short visit to Fromman, we drove at a rapid rate to Weimar.

(Sup.) Thursday, October 18, 1827.

Hegel is here, whom Goethe personally esteems very highly, though he does not much relish some of the fruits produced by his philosophy. Goethe gave a tea-party in honour of him this evening, at which Zelter was also present, who intended to take his departure again to-night.

A great deal was said about Hamann, with respect to whom Hegel was chief spokesman, displaying a deep insight into this extraordinary mind, such as could only have arisen from a most earnest and scrupulous study of the subject.

The discourse then turned upon the nature of dialectics. "They are, in fact," said Hegel, "nothing more than the regulated, methodically-cultivated spirit of contradiction which is innate in all men, and which

shows itself great as a talent in the distinction between the true and the false."

"Let us only hope," interposed Goethe, "that these intellectual arts and dexterities are not frequently misused, and employed to make the false true, and the true false."

"That certainly happens," returned Hegel; "but only with people who are mentally diseased."

"I therefore congratulate myself," said Goethe, "upon the study of nature, which preserves me from such a disease. For here we have to deal with the infinitely and eternally true, which throws off as incapable every one who does not proceed purely and honestly with the treatment and observation of his subject. I am also certain that many a dialectic disease would find a wholesome remedy in the study of nature."

We were still discoursing in the most cheerful manner, when Zelter arose and went out, without saying a word. We knew that it grieved him to take leave of Goethe, and that he chose this delicate expedient for avoiding a painful moment.

CONVERSATIONS OF GOETHE.

1828.

1828.

(Sup.) Tuesday, March 11, 1828.

FOR several weeks I have not been quite well. I sleep badly, and have the most harassing dreams from night to morning, in which I see myself in the most various states, carry on all sorts of conversation with known and unknown persons, get into disputes and quarrels, and all this in such a vivid manner, that I am perfectly conscious of every particular next morning. But this dreamy life consumes the powers of my brain, so that I feel weak and unnerved in the day-time, and without thought or pleasure for any intellectual activity.

I had frequently complained of my condition to Goethe, and he had repeatedly urged me to consult my physician. "Your malady," said he, "is certainly not very serious; it is probably nothing but a little stagnation, which a glass or two of mineral water or a little salts would remove. But do not let it linger any longer; attack it at once."

Goethe may have been right, and I said to myself that he was right; but my indecision and disinclination operated in this case, so that I again allowed many restless nights and wretched days to pass, without making the least effort to remove the indisposition.

As I did not appear to Goethe very gay and cheerful to-day after dinner, he lost his patience, and could not refrain from smiling at me ironically, and bantering me a little.

"You are a second Shandy," said he, "the father of that renowned Tristram, who was annoyed half his life by a creaking door, and who could not come to the resolution of removing the daily annoyance with a few drops of oil.

"But so it is with us all! The darkness and enlightenment of man make his destiny. The demon ought to lead us every day in leading strings, and tell us and direct us what we ought to do on every occasion. But the good spirit leaves us in the lurch, and we grope about in the dark.

"Napoleon was the man! Always enlightened, always clear and decided, and endowed at every hour with sufficient energy to carry into effect whatever he considered advantageous and necessary. His life was the stride of a demi-god, from battle to battle, and from victory to victory. It might well be said of him, that he was found in a state of continual enlightenment. On this account, his destiny was more brilliant than any the world had seen before him, or perhaps will ever see after him.

"Yes, yes, my good friend, that was a fellow whom we cannot imitate."

Goethe paced up and down the room. I had placed myself at the table, which had been already cleared, but upon which there was left some wine with some biscuits and fruit. Goethe filled for me, and compelled me to partake of both. "You have, indeed," said he,

“not condescended to be our guest at dinner to-day, but still a glass of this present from good friends ought to do you good.”

I did not refuse these good things, and Goethe continued to walk up and down the room, murmuring to himself in an excited state of mind, and from time to time uttering unintelligible words.

What he had just said about Napoleon was in my mind, and I endeavoured to lead the conversation back to that subject. “Still it appears to me,” I began, “that Napoleon was especially in that state of continued enlightenment when he was young, and his powers were yet on the increase,—when, indeed, we see at his side divine protection and a constant fortune. In later years, on the contrary, this enlightenment appears to have forsaken him, as well as his fortune and his good star.”

“What would you have?” returned Goethe. “I did not write my ‘love songs,’ or my ‘Werther,’ a second time. That divine enlightenment, whence everything proceeds, we shall always find in connection with youth and productiveness, as in the case of Napoleon, who was one of the most productive men that ever lived.

“Yes, yes, my good friend, one need not write poems and plays to be productive; there is also a productiveness of deeds, which in many cases stands an important degree higher. The physician himself must be productive, if he really intends to heal; if he is not so, he will only succeed now and then, as if by chance; but, on the whole, he will be only a bungler.”

“You appear,” added I, “in this case, to call productiveness that which is usually called genius.”

“One lies very near the other,” returned Goethe. “For what is genius but that productive power by which deeds arise that can display themselves before God and nature, and are therefore permanent, and produce results. All Mozart’s works are of this kind ; there lies in them a productive power which operates upon generation after generation, and still is not wasted or consumed.

“It is the same with other great composers and artists. What an influence have Phidias and Raphael had upon succeeding centuries, and Dürer and Holbein also. He who first invented the forms and proportions of the old German architecture, so that in the course of time a Strasburg minster and a cathedral of Cologne were possible, was also a genius ; for his thoughts have a power continually productive, and operate even to the present hour. Luther was a genius of a very important kind ; he has already gone on with influence for many a long day, and we cannot count the days when he will cease to be productive in future ages. Lessing would not allow himself the lofty title of a genius ; but his permanent influence bears witness against him. On the other hand, we have, in literature, other names, and those of importance, the possessors of which, whilst they lived, were deemed great geniuses, but whose influence ended with their life, and who were therefore less than they and others thought. For, as I said before, there is no genius without a productive power of permanent influence ; and furthermore, genius does not depend upon the business, the art, or the trade which one follows, but may be alike in all. Whether one shows oneself a man of genius in science, like

Oken and Humboldt, or in war and statesmanship, like Frederick, Peter the Great, and Napoleon, or whether one composes a song like Beranger, it all comes to the same thing; the only point is, whether the thought, the discovery, the deed, is living and can live on.

“Then I must add, it is not the mass of creations and deeds which proceed from a person, that indicates the productive man. We have, in literature, poets who are considered very productive, because volume after volume of their poems has appeared. But, in my opinion, these people ought to be called thoroughly unproductive; for what they have written is without life and durability. Goldsmith, on the contrary, has written so few poems that their number is not worth mentioning; but, nevertheless, I must pronounce him to be a thoroughly productive poet, and, indeed, even on that account, because the little that he has written has an inherent life which can sustain itself.”

A pause ensued, during which Goethe continued to pace up and down the room. In the mean time, I was desirous of hearing something more on this weighty point, and therefore endeavoured to arouse Goethe once more.

“Does this productiveness of genius,” said I, “lie merely in the mind of an important man, or does it also lie in the body?”

“The body has, at least,” said Goethe, “the greatest influence upon it. There was indeed a time when, in Germany, a genius was always thought of as short, weak, or hunch-backed; but commend me to a genius who has a well-proportioned body.

“When it was said of Napoleon that he was a man

of granite, this applied particularly to his body. What was it, then, which he could not and did not venture? From the burning sands of the Syrian deserts, to the snowy plains of Moscow, what an incalculable amount of marches, battles, and nightly bivouacs did he go through? And what fatigues and bodily privations was he forced to endure? Little sleep, little nourishment, and yet always in the highest mental activity. After the awful exertion and excitement of the eighteenth Brumaire, it was midnight, and he had not tasted anything during the whole day, and yet without thinking of strengthening his body, he felt power enough in the depth of the night to draw up the well-known proclamation to the French people. When one considers what he accomplished and endured, one might imagine that when he was in his fortieth year not a sound particle was left in him; but even at that age he still occupied the position of a perfect hero.

"But you are quite right; the real focus of his lustre belongs to his youth. And it is something to say that one of obscure origin, and at a time which set all capacities in motion, so distinguished himself as to become, in his seven-and-twentieth year, the idol of a nation of thirty millions! Yes, yes, my good friend, one must be young to do great things. And Napoleon is not the only one!"

"His brother Lucien," remarked I, "also did a great deal at an early age. We see him as president of the five hundred, and afterwards as minister of the interior, when he had scarcely completed his five-and-twentieth year."

"Why name Lucien?" interposed Goethe. "His-

tory presents to us hundreds of clever people, who, whilst still young, have, both in the cabinet and in the field, superintended the most important matters with great renown.

“If I were a prince,” continued he, with animation, “I would never place in the highest offices, people who have gradually risen by mere birth and seniority, and who in their old age move on leisurely in their accustomed track, for in this way but little talent is brought to light. I would have young men; but they must have capacities, and be endowed with clearness and energy, and also with the best will and the noblest character. Then there would be pleasure in governing and improving one’s people. But where is there a prince who would like this, and who would be so well served?”

“I have great hopes of the present Crown Prince of Prussia. From all that I hear and know of him, he is a very distinguished man; and this is essential to recognise and choose qualified and clever people. For, say what we will, like can only be recognised by like; and only a prince who himself possesses great abilities can properly acknowledge and value great abilities in his subjects and servants. ‘Let the path be open to talent’ was the well-known maxim of Napoleon, who really had a particular tact in the choice of his people, who knew how to place every important power where it appeared in its proper sphere, and who, therefore, during his life-time, was served in all his great undertakings as scarcely any one was served before him.”

Goethe delighted me particularly this evening. The

noblest part of his nature appeared alive in him, while the sound of his voice and the fire of his eyes were of such power, as if he were inspired by a fresh gleam of the best days of youth.

It was remarkable to me that he, who at so great an age himself superintended an important post, should speak so decidedly in favour of youth, and should desire the first offices in the state to be filled, if not by youths, at least by men still young. I could not forbear mentioning some Germans of high standing, who at an advanced age did not appear to want the necessary energy and youthful activity for the direction of the most important and most various affairs.

"Such men are natural geniuses," returned Goethe, "whose case is peculiar; they experience a renewed puberty, whilst other people are young but once.

"Every *Entelechia** is a piece of eternity, and the few years during which it is bound to the earthly body does not make it old. If this *Entelechia* is of a trivial kind, it will exercise but little sway during its bodily confinement; on the contrary, the body will predominate, and when this grows old the *Entelechia* will not hold and restrain it. But if the *Entelechia* is of a powerful kind, as is the case with all men of natural genius, then with its animating penetration of the body it will not only act with strengthening and ennobling power upon the organization, but it will also endeavour with its spiritual superiority to confer the privilege of perpetual youth. Thence it comes that in men of

* If for this Aristotelian word the reader substitutes the popular expression "soul," he will not go far wrong as far as this passage is concerned.—
Trans.

superior endowments, even during their old age, we constantly perceive fresh epochs of singular productiveness; they seem constantly to grow young again for a time, and that is what I call a repeated puberty. Still youth is youth, and however powerful an *Entelechia* may prove, it will never become quite master of the corporeal, and it makes a wonderful difference whether it finds in the body an ally or an adversary.

“There was a time in my life when I had to furnish a printed sheet every day, and I accomplished it with facility. I wrote my “Geschwister” (Brother and Sister) in three days; my “Clavigo,” as you know, in a week. Now it seems I can do nothing of the kind, and still I can by no means complain of want of productiveness even at my advanced age. But whereas in my youth I succeeded daily and under all circumstances, I now succeed only periodically and under certain favourable conditions. When ten or twelve years ago, in the happy time after the war of independence, the poems of the “Divan” had me in their power, I was often productive enough to compose two or three in a day, and it was all the same to me whether I was in the open air, in the chariot, or in an inn. Now, I can only work at the second part of my “Faust” during the early part of the day, when I feel refreshed and revived by sleep, and have not been perplexed by the trifles of daily life. And after all, what is it I achieve? Under the most favourable circumstances, a page of writing, but generally only so much as one could write in the space of a hand-breadth, and often, when in an unproductive humour, still less.”

“Are there, then, no means,” said I, “to call forth

a productive mood, or, if it is not powerful enough, of increasing it?"

"That is a curious point," said Goethe, "and a great deal might be thought and talked about it.

"No productiveness of the highest kind, no remarkable discovery, no great thought which bears fruit and has results, is in the power of any one; but such things are elevated above all earthly control. Man must consider them as an unexpected gift from above, as pure children of God, which he must receive and venerate with joyful thanks. They are akin to the demon, which does with him what it pleases, and to which he unconsciously resigns himself, whilst he believes he is acting from his own impulse. In such cases, man may often be considered as an instrument in a higher government of the world,—as a vessel found worthy for the reception of a divine influence. I say this, whilst I consider how often a single thought has given a different form to whole centuries, and how individual men have, by their expressions, imprinted a stamp upon their age, which has remained uneffaced, and has operated beneficially upon succeeding generations.

"There is, however, a productiveness of another kind subjected to earthly influences, and which man has more in his power, although he here also finds cause to bow before something divine. Under this category I place all that appertains to the execution of a plan, all the links of a chain of thought, the ends of which already shine forth; I also place there all that constitutes the visible body of a work of art.

"Thus, Shakspeare was inspired with the first

thought of his Hamlet, when the spirit of the whole presented itself to his mind as an unexpected impression, and he surveyed the several situations, characters, and conclusion, in an elevated mood, as a pure gift from above, on which he had no immediate influence, although the possibility of conceiving such a thought certainly presupposed a mind such as his. But the individual scenes, and the dialogue of the characters, he had completely in his power, so that he might produce them daily and hourly, and work at them for weeks if he liked. And, indeed, we see in all that he has achieved, constantly the same power of production; and in all his plays, we never come to a passage of which it could be said 'this was not written in the proper humour, or with the most perfect faculty.' Whilst we read him, we receive the impression of a man thoroughly strong and healthy, both in mind and body.

"Supposing, however, that the bodily constitution of a dramatic poet were not so strong and excellent, and that he were, on the contrary, subject to frequent illness and weakness, the productiveness necessary for the daily construction of his scenes would very frequently cease, and would often fail him for whole days. If now, by some spirituous drink, he tried to force his failing productiveness, and supply its deficiencies, the method would certainly answer, but it would be discoverable in all the scenes which he had written under such an influence, to their great disadvantage. My counsel is, therefore, to force nothing, and rather to trifle and sleep away all unproductive days and hours, than on such days to compose something which will afterwards give one no pleasure."

“You express,” returned I, “what I myself have very often experienced and felt, and what one must respect as thoroughly true and just. But still it appears to me that a person might, by natural means, heighten his productive mood, without exactly forcing it. It has often been the case in my life to be unable to arrive at any right conclusion in certain complicated circumstances. But if, in such a case, I have drunk a few glasses of wine, I have at once seen clearly what was to be done, and have come to a resolution on the spot. The adoption of a resolution is, after all, a species of productiveness, and if a glass or two of wine will bring about this good effect, such means are surely not to be rejected altogether.”

“I will not contradict your remark,” returned Goethe; “but what I said before is also correct, by which you see that truth may be compared to a diamond, the rays of which dart not to one side, but to many. Since you know my ‘Divan’ so well, you know also that I myself have said:—

When we have drunk
We know what’s right;

and therefore that I perfectly agree with you. Productive-making powers of a very important kind certainly are contained in wine; but still, all depends upon time and circumstances, and what is useful to one is prejudicial to another. Productive-making powers are also contained in sleep and repose; but they are also contained in movement. Such powers lie in the water, and particularly in the atmosphere. The fresh air of the open country is the proper place to which

we belong ; it is as if the breath of God were there wafted immediately to men, and a divine power exerted its influence. Lord Byron, who daily passed several hours in the open air, now riding on horseback along the sea-shore, now sailing or rowing in a boat, now bathing in the sea, and exercising his physical powers in swimming, was one of the most productive men who ever lived."

Goethe had seated himself opposite to me, and we spoke about all sorts of subjects. Then we again dwelt upon Lord Byron, and touched upon the many misfortunes which had embittered his later life, until at last a noble will, but an unhappy destiny, drove him into Greece, and entirely destroyed him.

"You will generally find," continued Goethe, "that in his middle age a man frequently experiences a change ; and that, while in his youth everything has favoured him, and has prospered with him, all is now completely reversed, and misfortunes and disasters are heaped one upon another.

"But do you know my opinion on this matter ? Man must be ruined again ! Every extraordinary man has a certain mission which he is called upon to accomplish. If he has fulfilled it, he is no longer needed upon earth in the same form, and Providence uses him for something else. But as everything here below happens in a natural way, the demons keep tripping him up till he falls at last. Thus it was with Napoleon and many others. Mozart died in his six-and-thirtieth year. Raphael at the same age. Byron only a little older. But all these had perfectly fulfilled their missions, and it was time for them to depart, that

other people might still have something to do in a world made to last a long while."

It was now late ; Goethe gave me his dear hand, and I departed.

(Sup.) Wednesday, March 12, 1828.

After I had quitted Goethe yesterday evening, the important conversation I had carried on with him remained constantly in my mind. The discourse had also been upon the sea and sea air ; and Goethe had expressed the opinion, that he considered all islanders and inhabitants of the sea-shore in temperate climates far more productive, and possessed of more active force, than the people in the interior of large continents.

Whether or not it was that I had fallen asleep with these thoughts, and with a certain longing for the inspiring powers of the sea ; suffice it to say, I had in the night the following pleasant, and to me very remarkable dream :—

I saw myself in an unknown region, amongst strange men, thoroughly cheerful and happy. The most beautiful summer day surrounded me in a charming scene, such as might be witnessed somewhere on the shores of the Mediterranean, in the south of Spain or France, or in the neighbourhood of Genoa. We had been drinking at noon round a merry table, and I went with some others, rather young people, to make another party for the afternoon.

We had loitered along through bushy and pleasant low lands, when we suddenly found ourselves in the sea, upon the smallest of islands, on a jutting rock, where there was scarcely room for five or six men, and where one could not stir for fear of slipping into the

water. Behind us, whence we had come, there was nothing to be seen but sea ; but before us lay the shore at about a quarter of an hour's distance, spread out most invitingly. The shore was in some places flat, in others rocky and somewhat elevated ; and one might observe, between green leaves and white tents, a crowd of joyous men in light-coloured clothes, recreating themselves with music, which sounded from the tents. "There is nothing else to be done," said one of us to the other, "we must undress and swim over." "It is all very well to say so," said I, "you are young, handsome fellows, and good swimmers ; but I swim badly, and I do not possess a shape fine enough to appear, with pleasure and comfort, before the strange people on shore." "You are a fool," said one of the handsomest, "undress yourself, give me your form and you shall have mine." At these words I undressed myself quickly, and was soon in the water, and immediately found myself in the body of the other as a powerful swimmer. I soon reached the shore, and, naked and dripping, stepped with the most easy confidence amongst the men. I was happy in the sensation of these fine limbs ; my deportment was unconstrained, and I at once became intimate with the strangers, at a table before an arbour, where there was a great deal of mirth. My comrades had now reached land one by one, and had joined us, and the only one missing was the youth with my form, in whose limbs I found myself so comfortable. At last he also approached the shore, and I was asked if I was not glad to see my former self? At these words I experienced a certain discomfort, partly because I did

not expect any great joy from myself, and partly because I feared that my young friend would ask for his own body back again. However, I turned to the water, and saw my second self swimming close up to me, and laughing at me with his head turned a little on one side. "There is no swimming with those limbs of yours," exclaimed he, "I have had a fine struggle against waves and breakers, and it is not to be wondered at that I have come so late, and am last of all." I at once recognised the countenance; it was my own, but grown young, and rather fuller and broader, with the freshest complexion. He now came to land, and whilst he raised himself, and first stepped along the sand, I had a view of his back and legs, and was delighted with the perfection of the form. He came up the rocky shore to us, and as he came up to me he had completely my new stature. "How is it," thought I to myself, "that your little body has grown so handsome. Have the primeval powers of the sea operated so wonderfully upon it, or is it because the youthful spirit of my friend has penetrated the limbs?" Whilst we enjoyed ourselves together for some time, I silently wondered that my friend did not show any inclination to resume his own body. "Truly," thought I, "he looks bravely, and it may be a matter of indifference to him in which body he is placed, but it is not the same thing to me; for I am not sure whether in that body I may not shrink and become as diminutive as before." In order to satisfy myself on this point, I took my friend aside, and asked him how he felt in my limbs? "Perfectly well," said he; "I have the same sensation of my own natural power as before; I do not know what you

have to complain of in your limbs. They are quite right with me ; and you see one only has to make the best of oneself. Remain in my body as long as you please ; for I am perfectly contented to remain in yours through all futurity." I was much pleased by this explanation, and as in all my sensations, thoughts, and recollections, I felt quite as usual, my dream gave me the impression of a perfect independence of the soul, and the possibility of a future existence in another body.

"That is a very pretty dream," said Goethe, when, after dinner to-day, I imparted to him the principal features. "We see," continued he, "that the muses visit you even in sleep, and, indeed, with particular favour ; for you must confess that it would be difficult for you to invent anything so peculiar and pretty in your waking moments."

"I can scarcely conceive how it happened to me," returned I ; "for I had felt so dejected all day that the contemplation of so fresh a life was far from my mind."

"Human nature possesses wonderful powers," returned Goethe, "and has something good in readiness for us when we least hope for it. There have been times in my life when I have fallen asleep in tears ; but in my dreams the most charming forms have come to console and to cheer me, and I have risen the next morning fresh and joyful.

"There is something more or less wrong among us old Europeans ; our relations are far too artificial and complicated, our nutriment and mode of life are without their proper nature, and our social inter-

course is without proper love and good will. Every one is polished and courteous; but no one has the courage to be hearty and true, so that an honest man, with natural views and feelings, stands in a very bad position. Often one cannot help wishing that one had been born upon one of the South Sea Islands, a so-called savage, so as to have thoroughly enjoyed human existence in all its purity, without any adulteration.

“If in a depressed mood one reflects deeply upon the wretchedness of our age, it often occurs to one that the world is gradually approaching the last day. And the evil accumulates from generation to generation! For it is not enough that we have to suffer for the sins of our fathers, but we hand down to posterity these inherited vices increased by our own.”

“Similar thoughts often occur to me,” answered I; “but if, at such a time, I see a regiment of German dragoons ride by me, and observe the beauty and power of these young people, I again derive some consolation, and say to myself, that the durability of mankind is after all not in such a desperate plight.”

“Our country people,” returned Goethe, “have certainly kept up their strength, and will, I hope, long be able not only to furnish us with good horsemen, but also to secure us from total decay and destruction. The rural population may be regarded as a magazine, from which the forces of declining mankind are always recruited and refreshed. But just go into our great towns, and you will feel quite differently. Just take a turn by the side of a second *diable boiteux*, or a physician with a large practice, and he will whisper to you tales which will horrify you at the misery, and

astonish you at the vice with which human nature is visited, and from which society suffers.

"But let us banish these hypochondriacal thoughts. How are you going on? What are you doing? What else have you seen to-day? Tell me, and inspire me with good thoughts."

"I have been reading Sterne," returned I, "where Yorick is sauntering about the streets of Paris, and makes the remark that every tenth man is a dwarf. I thought of that when you mentioned the vices of great towns. I also remember to have seen, in Napoleon's time, among the French infantry, one battalion which consisted entirely of Parisians, who were all such puny, diminutive people, that one could not comprehend what could be done with them in battle."

"The Scotch Highlanders under the Duke of Wellington," rejoined Goethe, "were doubtless heroes of another description."

"I saw them in Brussels a year before the battle of Waterloo," returned I. "They were, indeed, fine men; all strong, fresh, and active, as if just from the hand of their Maker. They all carried their heads so freely and gallantly, and stepped so lightly along with their strong bare legs, that it seemed as if there were no original sin, and no ancestral failing, as far as they were concerned."

"There is something peculiar in this," said Goethe. "Whether it lies in the race, in the soil, in the free political constitution, or in the healthy tone of education, —certainly, the English in general appear to have certain advantages over many others. Here in Weimar, we see only a few of them, and, probably, by no means the

best ; but what fine, handsome people they are. And however young they come here, they feel themselves by no means strange or embarrassed in this foreign atmosphere ; on the contrary, their deportment in society is as full of confidence, and as easy, as if they were lords everywhere, and the whole world belonged to them. This it is which pleases our women, and by which they make such havoc in the hearts of our young ladies. As a German father of a family, who is concerned for the tranquillity of his household, I often feel a slight shudder, when my daughter-in-law announces to me the expected arrival of some fresh, young islander. I already see in my mind's eye, the tears which will one day flow when he takes his departure. They are dangerous young people ; but this very quality of being dangerous is their virtue."

"Still, I would not assert," answered I, "that the young Englishmen in Weimar are more clever, more intelligent, better informed, or more excellent at heart than other people."

"The secret does not lie in these things, my good friend," returned Goethe. "Neither does it lie in birth and riches ; it lies in the courage which they have to be that for which nature has made them. There is nothing vitiated or spoilt about them, there is nothing half-way or crooked ; but such as they are, they are thoroughly complete men. That they are also sometimes complete fools, I allow with all my heart ; but that is still something, and has still always some weight in the scale of nature.

"The happiness of personal freedom, the consciousness of an English name, and of the importance at-

tached to it by other nations, is an advantage even to the children ; for in their own family, as well as in scholastic establishments, they are treated with far more respect, and enjoy a far freer development, than is the case with us Germans.

“In our own dear Weimar, I need only look out at the window to discover how matters stand with us. Lately, when the snow was lying upon the ground, and my neighbour’s children were trying their little sledges in the street, the police was immediately at hand, and I saw the poor little things fly as quickly as they could. Now, when the spring sun tempts them from the houses, and they would like to play with their companions before the door, I see them always constrained, as if they were not safe, and feared the approach of some despot of the police. Not a boy may crack a whip, or sing or shout ; the police is immediately at hand to forbid it. This has the effect with us all of taming youth prematurely, and of driving out all originality and all wildness, so that in the end nothing remains but the Philistine.

“You know that scarcely a day passes in which I am not visited by some travelling foreigner. But if I were to say that I took great pleasure, in the personal appearance, especially of young, learned Germans from a certain north-eastern quarter, I should tell a falsehood.

“Short-sighted, pale, narrow-chested, young without youth ; that is a picture of most of them as they appear to me. And if I enter into a conversation with any of them, I immediately observe that the things in which one of us takes pleasure seem to them vain

and trivial, that they are entirely absorbed in the Idea, and that only the highest problems of speculation are fitted to interest them. Of sound senses or delight in the sensual, there is no trace ; all youthful feeling and all youthful pleasure are driven out of them, and that irrecoverably ; for if a man is not young in his twentieth year, how can he be so in his fortieth ?”

Goethe sighed and was silent.

I thought of the happy time in the last century, in which Goethe's youth fell ; the summer air of Seesenheim passed before my soul, and I reminded him of the verses,—

In the afternoon we sat,
Young people, in the cool.

“ Ah,” sighed Goethe, “ those were, indeed, happy times. But we will drive them from our minds, that the dark foggy days of the present may not become quite insupportable.”

“ A second Redeemer,” said I, “ would be required to remove from us the seriousness, the discomfort, and the monstrous oppressiveness of the present state of things.”

“ If he came,” answered Goethe, “ he would be crucified a second time. Still, we by no means need anything so great. If we could only alter the Germans after the model of the English, if we could only have less philosophy and more power of action, less theory and more practice, we might obtain a good share of redemption, without waiting for the personal majesty of a second Christ. Much may be done from below by the people by means of schools and domestic education ;

much from above by the rulers and those in immediate connection with them.

“Thus, for instance, I cannot approve the requisition, in the studies of future statesmen, of so much theoretically-learned knowledge, by which young people are ruined before their time, both in mind and body. When they enter into practical service, they possess, indeed, an immense stock of philosophical and learned matters; but in the narrow circle of their calling, this cannot be practically applied, and must therefore be forgotten as useless. On the other hand, what they most needed they have lost; they are deficient in the necessary mental and bodily energy, which is quite indispensable when one would enter properly into practical life.

“And then, are not love and benevolence also needed in the life of a statesman,—in the management of men? And how can any one feel and exercise benevolence towards another, when he is ill at ease with himself.

“But all these people are in a dreadfully bad case. The third part of the learned men and statesmen, shackled to the desk are ruined in body, and consigned to the demon of hypochondria. Here there should be action from above, that future generations may at least be preserved from a like destruction.

“In the mean time,” continued Goethe, smiling, “let us remain in a state of hopeful expectation as to the condition of us Germans a century hence, and whether we shall then have advanced so far as to be no longer *savants* and philosophers, but men.”

(Sup.*) Friday, May 16, 1828.

I took a drive with Goethe. He amused himself with recollections of his disputes with Kotzebue and Co., and recited some very lively epigrams against the former, which were certainly more jocular than cutting. I asked him why he had not included them in his works.

"I have a whole collection of such little poems," returned Goethe, "which I keep secret, and only show occasionally to my most intimate friends. This was the only innocent weapon which I had at command against the attacks of my enemies. I thus quietly found a vent by which I freed and purified myself from the horrid feeling of malevolence which I must otherwise have felt and fostered against the public and often malicious cavillings of my opponents. I have, therefore, by these little poems done myself an essential and personal service; but I do not want to occupy the public with my private squabbles, or to injure any living person. In later times, some of these things may be brought out without hesitation."

(Sup.*) Friday, June 6, 1828.

The King of Bavaria, some time ago, sent his court painter, Stieler, to Weimar, in order to take Goethe's portrait. Stieler brought with him, as a sort of letter of introduction, and as a proof of his skill, a finished portrait, the size of life, of a very beautiful young lady, namely, the young Munich actress, Fräulein von Hagen. Goethe gave Stieler all the necessary sittings, and his portrait had now been finished for some days.

To-day, I dined with him alone. At dessert he rose,

and conducting me into the cabinet adjoining the dining-room, showed me Stieler's newly completed work. Then, very cautiously, he led me further on into the so-called Majolika chamber, where we saw the portrait of the beautiful actress. "That is worth something," said he, after we had observed it for some time, "is it not? Stieler was no fool. He employed this beautiful morsel as a bait for me, and whilst by such arts he induced me to sit, he flattered me with the hope that, under his pencil, another angel would appear, whilst he was only painting the head of an old man."

Sunday, June 15, 1828.

We had not been long at table before Herr Seidel was announced, accompanied by the Tyrolese. The singers remained in the garden-room, so that we could see them perfectly through the open doors, and their song was heard to advantage from that distance. Herr Seidel sat down with us. These songs and the Gejodel* of the cheerful Tyrolese, with their peculiar burden, delighted us young people. Fräulein Ulrica and I were particularly pleased with the "Strauss," and "Du, du, liegst mir im Herzen," and asked for a copy of them. Goethe seemed by no means so much delighted as we.

"One must ask children and birds," said he, "how cherries and strawberries taste."

Between the songs the Tyrolese played various national dances, on a sort of horizontal guitar, accompanied by a clear-toned German flute.

Young Goethe was called out, but soon returned and

* The peculiar Tyrolese burden.—*Trans.*

dismissed the Tyrolese. He sat down with us again. We talked of "Oberon," and the great concourse of people who had come together from all quarters to see that opera; so that even at noon there were no more tickets to be got. Young Goethe proposed that we should leave the table.

"Dear father," said he, "our friends will wish to go somewhat earlier to the theatre this evening."

Goethe thought such haste very odd, as it was scarcely four o'clock; however, he made no opposition, and we dispersed through the apartments. Seidel came to me and some others, and said softly, and with a troubled brow,

"You need anticipate no pleasure at the theatre; there will be no performance; the Grand Duke is dead; he died on his journey hither from Berlin."

A general shock went through the company. Goethe came in; we went on as if nothing had happened, and talked of indifferent things. Goethe called me to the window, and talked about the Tyrolese and the theatre.

"You have my box to-day," said he, "and need not go till six; stay after the others, that we may have a little chat."

Young Goethe was trying to send the guests away, that he might break the news to his father before the return of the Chancellor, who had brought it to him. Goethe could not understand his son's strange conduct, and seemed annoyed.

"Will you not stay for coffee?" said he; "it is scarcely four o'clock."

The others all departed; and I, too, took my hat.

"What! are you going too?" said he, astonished.

“Yes,” said young Goethe; “Eckermann has something to do before going to the theatre.” “Yes,” said I, “I have something to do.” “Go along then,” said Goethe, shaking his head with a suspicious air; “still, I do not understand you.”

We went with Fräulein Ulrica into the upper rooms, while young Goethe remained below, and communicated the sad tidings to his father.

I saw Goethe late in the evening. Before I entered his chamber, I heard him sighing and talking aloud to himself: he seemed to feel that an irreparable rent had been torn in his existence. All consolation he refused, and would hear nothing of the sort.

“I thought,” said he, “that I should depart before him; but God disposes as he thinks best; and all that we poor mortals have to do, is to endure and keep ourselves upright as well and as long as we can.”

The Dowager Grand Duchess received the melancholy news at her summer residence of Wilhelmsthal, the younger members of the family received it in Russia. Goethe went soon to Dornburg, to withdraw himself from daily saddening impressions, and to restore himself by fresh activity in a new scene.

By important literary incitements on the part of the French, he had been once more impelled to his theory of plants; and this rural abode, where, at every step into the pure air, he was surrounded by the most luxurious vegetation, in the shape of twining vines and sprouting flowers, was very favourable to such studies.

I sometimes visited him there, in company with his

daughter-in-law and grandchildren. He seemed very happy, and could not refrain from repeatedly expressing his delight at the beautiful situation of the castle and gardens.

And, indeed, there was, from windows at such a height, an enchanting prospect. Beneath was the variegated valley, with the Saale meandering through the meadows. On the opposite side, toward the east, were woody hills, over which the eye could wander afar, so that one felt that this situation was, in the day time, favourable to the observation of passing showers losing themselves in the distance, and at night to the contemplation of the eastern stars and the rising sun.

"I enjoy here," said Goethe, "both good days and good nights. Often before dawn I am already awake, and lie down by the open window, to enjoy the splendour of the three planets, which are at present to be seen together, and to refresh myself with the increasing brilliancy of the morning-red. I then pass almost the whole day in the open air, and hold spiritual communion with the tendrils of the vine, which say good things to me, and of which I could tell you wonders. I also write poems again, which are not bad, and, if it were permitted me, I should like always to remain in this situation."

Thursday, September 11, 1828.

At two o'clock to-day, in the very finest weather, Goethe returned from Dornburg. He looked very well, and was quite browned by the sun. We soon sat down to dinner, in the chamber next the garden, the doors of which stood open. He told us of many visits and presents which he had received; and seemed

to take pleasure in interspersing his conversation with light jests. If, however, one looked deeper, one could not but perceive a certain embarrassment, such as a person feels who returns to a former situation, conditioned by manifold relations, views, and requisitions.

During the first course, a message came from the Dowager Grand Duchess, expressing her pleasure at Goethe's return, and announcing that she would have the pleasure of visiting him on the following Tuesday.

Since the death of the Grand Duke, Goethe had seen no member of the reigning family. He had, indeed, corresponded constantly with the Dowager Grand Duchess, so that they had sufficiently expressed their feelings upon their common loss. Still, the personal interview could not but awake painful emotions, and could not be anticipated without some apprehension. Neither had Goethe yet seen the young Duke and Duchess, nor paid his homage to them as new rulers of the land. All this he had now to undergo, and even, though it could not disturb him as an accomplished man of the world, it was an impediment to his talent, which always loved to move in its innate directions, and in its own activity. Visits, too, threatened him from all parts. The meeting at Berlin of celebrated natural philosophers had set in motion many important personages, who, passing through Weimar on their way, had, some of them, announced themselves, and were soon expected. Whole weeks of disturbance, which would take the inner sense out of its usual track, and other annoyances connected with visits otherwise so valuable ;—all this was foreseen

like a coming spectre by Goethe, when he again set his foot on the threshold, and paced his rooms. What made all these coming evils still worse, was a circumstance which I cannot pass over. The fifth section of his works, which was to contain the "Wanderjahre," had been promised for the press at Christmas. Goethe had begun entirely to remodel this novel, which originally appeared in one volume, combining so much new matter with the old, that in the new edition it would occupy three volumes.

Much is done, but there is also much to do. The manuscript has everywhere gaps of white paper, which are yet to be filled up. Here something is wanting to the introduction ; here is to be found a suitable link to render the reader less sensible that this is a collective work ; here are fragments of great interest, some of which want a beginning, others an end ; so that, altogether, there is much to do to all the three volumes, to make the important work at once attractive and graceful.

Last spring Goethe gave me this manuscript to look over. We then both in words and writing discussed the subject at great length. I advised him to devote the whole summer to the completion of this work, and to lay aside all others for the time. He was likewise convinced of the necessity of the case, and had resolved to do so ; but the death of the Grand Duke had caused a gap in his existence ; the tranquillity and cheerfulness necessary to such a composition were not now to be thought of, and he needed all his strength merely to sustain the blow and revive from it. Now, when with the commencement of autumn, returning

from Dornburg, he again paced the rooms of his Weimar residence, the thought of completing his "Wanderjahre," for which he had now only the space of a few months, came vividly before his mind, in conflict with the various interruptions which awaited him, and impeded the free action of his talent. When all these matters are taken into consideration, I shall be understood when I say that Goethe was ill at ease within himself, although he jested lightly at dinner. I have another reason for mentioning these circumstances, they are connected with an observation of Goethe's, which appeared to me very remarkable, which expressed his situation and peculiar character, and of which I will now speak.

Professor Abeken of Osnaburg had sent me, shortly before the 28th of August, an enclosure, requesting me to give it to Goethe on his birth-day, and saying it was a memorial relating to Schiller, which would certainly give him pleasure. When Goethe was speaking to-day, at dinner, of the various presents which had been sent to him at Dornburg in honour of his birth-day, I asked him what Abeken's packet contained.

"It was a remarkable present," said Goethe, "which really gave me great pleasure. An amiable lady, with whom Schiller took tea, conceived the happy idea of writing down all he said. She comprehended it well, and related it with accuracy, and after so long a time, it still reads well, inasmuch as one is transplanted immediately into a situation which is now past by with a thousand others as interesting, while the living spirit of this one only has been felicitously caught and fixed upon paper.

“Schiller appears here, as always, in perfect possession of his sublime nature. He is as great at the tea-table as he would have been in a council of state. Nothing constrains him, nothing narrows him, nothing draws downward the flight of his thoughts; the great views which lie within him are ever expressed freely and fearlessly. He was a true man, such as one ought to be. We others always feel ourselves subject to conditions. The persons, the objects that surround us, have their influence upon us. The tea-spoon constrains us, if it is of gold, when it should be of silver, and so, paralyzed by a thousand considerations, we do not succeed in expressing freely whatever may be great in our nature. We are the slaves of objects round us, and appear little or important according as these contract or give us room to expand.”

Goethe was silent. The conversation turned on other subjects; but I continued to meditate on these important words, which had touched and expressed my own inmost soul.

(Sup.*) Friday, September 26, 1828.

Goethe showed me to-day his rich collection of fossils, which he keeps in the detached pavilion in his garden. The collection was begun by himself; but his son has greatly increased it; and it is particularly remarkable for a long series of petrified bones, all of which were found in the neighbourhood of Weimar.

Wednesday, October 1, 1828.

Herr Hönninghausen of Crefeld, head of a great mercantile house, and also an amateur of natural science, especially mineralogy,—a man possessed of varied in-

formation, through extensive travels and studies—dined with Goethe to-day. He had returned from the meeting of natural philosophers at Berlin, and a great deal was said about things connected with the subject, especially mineralogical matters.

There was also some talk about the Vulcanists, and the way in which men arrive at views and hypotheses about nature. On this occasion, several great natural philosophers were mentioned, including Aristotle, concerning whom Goethe spoke thus :—

“Aristotle observed nature better than any modern, but he was too hasty with his opinions. We must go slowly and gently to work with nature, if we would get anything out of her.

“If, on investigating natural objects, I formed an opinion, I did not expect nature to concede the point at once, but I pursued her with observations and experiments, and was satisfied if she were kind enough to confirm my opinion when occasion offered. If she did not do this, she at any rate brought me to some other view, which I followed out, and which I perhaps found her more willing to confirm.”

Friday, October 3, 1828.

To-day, at dinner, I talked with Goethe about Fouqué's “*Sängerkrieg auf der Wartburg*,”* which I had read, in compliance with his wish. We agreed that this poet had spent his life in old-German studies, without drawing from them any real culture in the end.

* The “War of the Singers of the Wartburg” was a famous poetical contest in the days of the old Minnesängers.—*Trans.*

“From these old-German gloomy times,” said Goethe, “we can obtain as little as from the Servian songs, and similar barbaric popular poetry. We can read it and be interested about it for a while, but merely to cast it aside, and let it lie behind us. Generally speaking, a man is quite sufficiently saddened by his own passions and destiny, and need not make himself more so, by the darkness of a barbaric past. He needs enlightening and cheering influences, and should therefore turn to those eras in art and literature, during which remarkable men obtained perfect culture, so that they were satisfied with themselves, and able to impart to others the blessings of their culture.

“But if you would have a good opinion of Fouqué, read his ‘Undine,’ which is really charming. The subject is, indeed, very good, and one cannot even say that the writer has done with it all that was possible; however, ‘Undine’ is good, and will give you pleasure.”

“I have been unfortunate in my acquaintance with the most modern German literature,” said I. “I came to the poems of Egon Ebert from Voltaire, whose acquaintance I had just made by those little poems which are addressed to individuals, and which certainly belong to the best he ever wrote. And now, I have fared no better with Fouqué. While deeply engaged in Walter Scott’s ‘Fair Maid of Perth,’ the first work of this great writer which I had ever read, I am induced to put it aside, and give myself up to the ‘Sängerkrieg auf der Wartburg.’”

“Against these great foreigners,” said Goethe, “the modern Germans certainly cannot keep their ground;

but it is desirable that you should, by degrees, make yourself acquainted with all writers, foreign and domestic, that you may see how that higher world-culture, which the poet needs, is really to be obtained."

Frau von Goethe came in, and sat down to the table with us.

"But," continued Goethe, with animation, "Walter Scott's 'Fair Maid of Perth' is excellent, is it not? There is finish! there is a hand! What a firm foundation for the whole, and in particulars not a touch which does not lead to the catastrophe! Then, what details of dialogue and description, both of which are excellent.

"His scenes and situations are like pictures by Teniers; in the arrangement they show the summit of art, the individual figures have a speaking truth, and the execution is extended with artistical love to the minutest details, so that not a stroke is lost. How far have you read?"

"I have come," said I, "to the passage where Henry Smith carries the pretty minstrel girl home through the streets, and round about lanes; and where, to his great vexation, Proudfoot and Dwining met him."

"Ah," said Goethe, "that is excellent; that the obstinate, honest blacksmith should be brought at last to take with him not only the suspicious maiden, but even the little dog, is one of the finest things to be found in any novel. It shows a knowledge of human nature, to which the deepest mysteries are revealed."

"It was also," said I, "an admirable notion to make the heroine's father a glover, who, by his trade in skins,

must have been long in communication with the Highlanders."

"Yes," said Goethe, "that is a touch of the highest order. From this circumstance spring the relations and situations most favourable for the whole book, and these by this means also obtain a real basis, so that they have an air of the most convincing truth. You find everywhere in Walter Scott a remarkable security and thoroughness in his delineation, which proceeds from his comprehensive knowledge of the real world, obtained by life-long studies and observations, and a daily discussion of the most important relations. Then come his great talent and his comprehensive nature. You remember the English critic, who compares the poets to the voices of male singers, of which some can command only a few fine tones, while others have the whole compass, from the highest to the lowest, completely in their power. Walter Scott is one of this last sort. In the 'Fair Maid of Perth,' you will not find a single weak passage to make you feel as if his knowledge and talent were insufficient. He is equal to his subject in every direction in which it takes him; the king, the royal brother, the prince, the head of the clergy, the nobles, the magistracy, the citizens and mechanics, the Highlanders, are all drawn with the same sure hand, and hit off with equal truth."

"The English," said Frau von Goethe, "particularly like the character of Henry Smith, and Walter Scott seems to have made him the hero of the book; however, he is not my favourite; I like the Prince."

"The Prince," said I, "is, indeed, amiable enough with all his wildness, and is as well drawn as any of the rest."

"The passage," said Goethe, "where, sitting on horseback, he makes the pretty minstrel girl step upon his foot, that he may raise her up for a kiss, is in the boldest English style. But you ladies are wrong always to take sides. Usually, you read a book to find nutrition for the heart; to find a hero whom you could love. This is not the way to read; the great point is, not whether this or that character pleases, but whether the whole book pleases."

"We women were made so, dear father," said she, affectionately leaning over the table to press his hand.

"Well, we must let you have your own way in your amiability," replied Goethe.

The last number of the "Globe" lay by him, and he took it up. I talked, in the mean while, with Frau von Goethe, about some young Englishmen, whose acquaintance I had made at the theatre.

"What men these writers in the 'Globe are!'" resumed Goethe, with animation. "One has scarcely a notion how it is they become greater and more remarkable every day, and how much, as it were, they are imbued with one spirit. Such a paper would be utterly impossible in Germany. We are mere individuals; harmony and concert are not to be thought of; each has the opinions of his province, his city, and his own idiosyncrasy; and it will be a long while before we have attained an universal culture."

(Sup.*) Monday, October 6, 1828.

Dined with Goethe, in company with Herr von Martius, who has been here for some days, and who spoke with Goethe on botanical subjects. It is

especially the spiral tendency of plants, about which Herr von Martius has made important discoveries; these he imparted to Goethe, to whom they open a new field. Goethe appeared to take up his friend's idea with a sort of youthful ardour. "For the physiology of plants," said he, "much is gained by it. The new discovery of the spiral tendency is thoroughly conformable to my doctrine of metamorphoses; it has been found on the same path, but is a considerable step in advance of it."

Tuesday, October 7, 1828.

There was the most lively party at dinner to-day. Besides the Weimar friends, there were some natural philosophers returned from Berlin, among whom, Herr von Martius, from Munich, who sat next Goethe, was known to me. There was joking and conversations on the most various subjects. Goethe was particularly good-humoured and communicative. The theatre was then talked about, and much was said of the opera last given—Rossini's "Moses." They found fault with the subject, and both praised and found fault with the music.

Goethe said, "I do not understand how you can separate the subject from the music, and enjoy each by itself. You say the subject is not a good one; but you can set that aside, and enjoy the excellent music. I really admire this arrangement in your natures, by which your ears are able to listen to pleasant sounds, while the most powerful sense, vision, is tormented by the absurdest objects. And that this 'Moses,' is absurd, you will not deny. When the curtain rises you see the people standing at prayer. This is very wrong.

It is written 'When thou prayest, go into thy closet, and shut the door.' But there ought to be no praying on the stage.

"I would have made a wholly different 'Moses,' and have begun the piece quite otherwise. I would have first shown you how the children of Israel in their hard bondage suffered from the tyranny of the Egyptian task-masters, in order to render more conspicuous the merit of Moses in freeing his people from this shameful oppression."

Goethe then cheerfully went through the whole opera step by step, through all the scenes and acts, full of life and intelligence, and with a historical feeling for the subject, to the delighted astonishment of the whole company, who could not but admire the irrepressible flow of his thoughts, and the wealth of his invention. It passed before me too quickly for me to seize it; but I remember the dance of the Egyptians, which Goethe introduced to express their joy at the return of light, after the darkness had been overcome.

The conversation turned from Moses to the deluge, and took a scientific turn.

"It is said," observed Herr von Martius, "they have found on Ararat, a petrified piece of Noah's ark, and I shall be surprised if they do not also find petrified skulls of the first men."

This remark led to others of a similar kind, and the conversation turned upon the various races of men—how as black, brown, yellow, and white, they inhabit the different countries of the earth. The question finally arose whether we ought to assume that all men are descended from the single pair, Adam and Eve.

Von Martius was for the biblical account, which he sought to confirm by the maxim, that nature goes to work as economically as possible in her productions.

“I cannot agree to that opinion,” said Goethe; “I maintain rather that nature is always lavish, even prodigal; and that it would show more acquaintance with her to believe she has, instead of one paltry pair, produced men by dozens or hundreds.

“When the earth had arrived at a certain point of maturity, the water had ebbed away, and the dry land was sufficiently verdant, came the epoch for the creation of man, and men arose, through the omnipotence of God, wherever the ground permitted; perhaps on the heights first.

“To believe that this happened I esteem reasonable; but to attempt to decide how it happened I deem an useless trouble, which we will leave to those who like to busy themselves with insolvable problems, and have nothing better to do.”

“Even,” said Herr von Martius, archly, “if I could, as a naturalist, willingly yield to your excellency’s opinion, I should, as a good Christian, find some difficulty in adopting a view which cannot well be reconciled with the account given us in the Bible.”

“Holy writ,” replied Goethe, “speaks, certainly, only of one pair of human beings, whom God made on the sixth day; but the gifted men who wrote down the Word of God, as recorded in the Bible, had first in view their own chosen people; and as far as that people is concerned, we will not dispute the honour of a descent from Adam and Eve. But we, as well as the Negroes and Laplanders, and slender men, who are

handsomer than any of us, had certainly different ancestors ; and this worthy company must confess that we at present differ in a variety of particulars from the genuine descendants of Adam, and that they, especially where money is concerned, are superior to us all."

We laughed ; the conversation became general. Goethe, excited by Von Martius to argument, said many interesting things, which, under the appearance of jesting, had a deeper meaning at bottom.

After dinner, the Prussian minister, Herr von Jordan, was announced, and we went into the next room.

Wednesday, October 8, 1828.

Tieck, returning from a journey to the Rhine, with his wife, his daughters, and Countess Finkenstein, was expected to dine with Goethe to-day. I met them in the ante-room. Tieck looked very well ; the Rhine baths seemed to have had a favourable effect upon him. I told him that since I had seen him I had been reading Sir Walter Scott's new novel, and what pleasure this extraordinary talent had given me.

"I suspect," said Tieck, "that this last novel of Scott's, which I have not yet read, is the best he has ever written ; however, he is so great a writer, that the first work of his which you read always excites astonishment, approach him on what side you will."

Professor Götting came in, just fresh from his Italian tour. I was extremely glad to see him again, and drew him to a window that he might tell me what he had seen.

"To Rome !" said he ; "you must to Rome, if you would become anything ! That is indeed a city !

that is a life ! that is a world ! Whatever is small in our nature cannot be eradicated while we are in Germany, but as soon as we enter Rome a transformation takes place in us, and we feel ourselves great, like the objects which surround us."

"Why," said I, "did you not stay there longer?"

"My money and my leave of absence were at an end," he replied ; "but I felt very uncomfortable when I again crossed the Alps, leaving fair Italy behind me."

Goethe came in, and greeted his guests. He talked on various subjects with Tieck and his family, and then offered the countess his arm to take her to the dining-room. We followed, and when we took our seats at the table made a motley group. The conversation was lively and unconstrained, but I remember little of what was said.

After dinner, the Princes von Oldenburg were announced. We then went up to Frau von Goethe's apartment, where Fräulein Agnes Tieck seated herself at the piano, and gave us the song "*Im Felde schleich' ich still und wild*," with a fine alto voice, and so thoroughly in the spirit of the situation, that it made quite an ineffaceable impression on the mind.

Thursday, October 9, 1828.

I dined to-day with Goethe and Frau von Goethe alone ; and as it often happens that a conversation begun on one day is continued on another, so was it on this occasion. Rossini's "*Moses*" was again spoken of, and we recalled with pleasure Goethe's lively invention the day before yesterday.

"What I said, in the merriment and good-humour

of the moment, about ‘Moses,’” said he, “I cannot recall; for such things are done quite unconsciously. But of this I am certain, that I cannot enjoy an opera unless the story is as perfect as the music, so that the two may keep pace one with another. If you ask what opera I consider good, I would name the “Wasserträger” (Water-Carrier); for here the subject is so perfect, that, if given as a mere drama, without music, it could be seen with pleasure. Composers either do not understand the importance of a good foundation, or they have not intelligent poets who know to assist them with good stories. If ‘Der Freischütz’ had not been so good a subject, the mere music would hardly have drawn such crowds; and therefore Herr Kind should have some share in the honour.”

After various discussion on this subject, we spoke of Professor Götting, and his travels in Italy.

“I cannot blame the good man,” said Goethe, “for speaking of Italy with such enthusiasm; I well know what I experienced myself. Indeed, I may say that only in Rome have I felt what it really is to be a man. To this elevation, to this happiness of feeling, I have never since arisen; indeed, compared with my situation at Rome, I have never since felt real gladness.”

“But,” continued Goethe, after a pause, “we will not give ourselves up to melancholy thoughts. How do you get on with your ‘Fair Maid of Perth?’ How far have you read? Tell me all about it.”

“I read slowly,” said I. “However, I am now as far as the scene where Proudfoot, when in Henry Smith’s armour he imitates his walk and whistle, is slain, and on the following morning is found in the

streets of Perth by the citizens, who, taking him for Smith, raise a great alarm through the city."

"Ay," said Goethe, "that scene is remarkable; it is one of the best."

"I have been particularly struck," said I, "with Walter Scott's great talent for disentangling confused situations, so that the whole separates itself into masses and quiet pictures, which leave on our minds an impression as if, like omniscient beings, we had looked down and seen events which were occurring at the same time in various places."

"Generally," said Goethe, "he shows great understanding of art; for which reason we, and those like us, who always particularly look to see how things are done, find a double interest and the greatest profit in his works.

"I will not anticipate, but you will find in the third volume an admirable contrivance. You have already seen how the prince in council makes the wise proposal to let the rebel Highlanders destroy one another in combat, and how Palm Sunday is appointed for the day when the hostile clans are to come down to Perth, and to fight for life or death, thirty against thirty. You will see with admiration how Scott manages to make one man fail on one side on the decisive day, and with what art he contrives to bring his hero Smith from a distance into the vacant place among the combatants. This is admirably done; and you will be delighted when you come to it.

"But, when you have finished the 'Fair Maid of Perth,' you must at once read 'Waverley,' which is indeed from quite a different point of view, but which

may, without hesitation, be set beside the best works that have ever been written in this world. We see that it is the same man who wrote the 'Fair Maid of Perth,' but that he has yet to gain the favour of the public, and therefore collects his forces so that he may not give a touch that is short of excellence. The 'Fair Maid of Perth,' on the other hand, is from a freer pen; the author is now sure of his public, and he proceeds more at liberty. After reading 'Waverley,' you will understand why Walter Scott still designates himself the author of that work; for there he showed what he could do, and he has never since written anything to surpass, or even equal, that first published novel."

Thursday evening, October 9, 1828.

In honour of Tieck, a very pleasant tea-party was given this evening in the apartments of Frau von Goethe. I made the acquaintance of Count and Countess Medem. The latter told me that she had seen Goethe to-day, and had been highly delighted with the impression he had made. The count was especially interested about "Faust" and its continuation, and conversed with me about it for some time with much animation.

We had hoped that Tieck would read something aloud, and he did so. The party retired into a more remote room, and after all had comfortably seated themselves in a wide circle on chairs and sofas, he read "Clavigo."

I had often read and felt this drama; but now it appeared to me quite new, and produced an effect such as I had scarcely experienced before. It seemed as if I heard

it from the stage, only better ; every character and situation was more perfectly felt : it produced the impression of a theatrical representation in which each part is well performed.

It would be hard to say what parts Tieck read best ; whether those in which the powers and passions of the male characters are developed ; or the quiet clear scenes addressed to the understanding ; or the moments of tortured love. For giving expression to passages of this last sort, he had especial qualifications. The scene between Marie and Clavigo is still ringing in my ears ; the oppressed bosom ; the faltering and trembling of the voice ; the broken half-stifled words and sounds ; the panting and sighing of a hot breath, accompanied with tears ;—all this is still present with me, and will never be forgotten. Every one was absorbed in listening, and wholly carried away. The lights burned dim ; nobody thought of that, or ventured to snuff them, for fear of the slightest interruption. Tears constantly dropping from the eyes of the ladies showed the deep effect of the piece, and were the most hearty tribute that could be paid to the reader or the poet.

Tieck had finished, and rose, wiping the perspiration from his forehead ; but the hearers seemed still fettered to their chairs. Each man appeared too deeply engaged with what had just been passing through his soul, to have ready the suitable words of gratitude for him who had produced so wonderful an effect upon us all. Gradually, however, we recovered ourselves. The company arose, and talked cheerfully with one another. Then we partook of a supper which stood ready on little tables in the adjoining rooms.

Goethe himself was not present this evening ; but his spirit and a remembrance of him were living among us all. He sent an apology to Tieck ; and to his daughters, Agnes and Dorothea, two handkerchief-pins, with his own picture and red ribbons, which Frau von Goethe gave them, and fastened to their dresses like little orders.

Friday, October 10, 1828.

From Mr. William Frazer of London, editor of the "Foreign Review," I received, this morning, two copies of the third number of that periodical, and gave one of them to Goethe at dinner.

I found again a pleasant dinner party, invited in honour of Tieck and the Countess, who, at the urgent request of Goethe and their other friends, had remained another day, the rest of the family having set off in the morning for Dresden.

At table a special subject of conversation was English literature, and particularly Walter Scott, on which occasion Tieck said, that he brought to Germany the first copy of *Waverley* ten years ago.

Saturday, October 11, 1828.

The above-mentioned number of the "Foreign Review" contained, with a variety of other important and interesting articles, a very fine essay by Carlyle, upon Goethe, which I studied this morning.

I went to Goethe a little earlier to dinner, that I might have an opportunity of talking this over with him before the arrival of the other guests. I found him, as I wished, still alone, expecting the company. He wore his black coat and star, with which I so

much like to see him. He appeared to-day in quite youthful spirits, and we began immediately to speak on topics interesting to both. Goethe told me that he likewise had been looking at Carlyle's article this morning, and thus we were both in a position to exchange commendations of these foreign attempts.

"It is pleasant to see," said Goethe, "how the earlier pedantry of the Scotch has changed into earnestness and profundity. When I recollect how the 'Edinburgh Reviewers' treated my works not many years since, and when I now consider Carlyle's merits with respect to German literature, I am astonished at the important step for the better."

"In Carlyle," said I, "I venerate most of all the mind and character which lie at the foundation of his tendencies. The chief point with him is the culture of his own nation; and, in the literary productions of other countries, which he wishes to make known to his contemporaries, he pays less attention to the arts of talent, than to the moral elevation which can be attained through such works."

"Yes," said Goethe, "the temper in which he works is always admirable. What an earnest man he is! and how he has studied us Germans! He is almost more at home in our literature than ourselves. At any rate, we cannot vie with him in our researches in English literature."

"The article," said I, "is written with a fire and impressiveness which show that there are many prejudices and contradictions to contend with in England. 'Wilhelm Meister' especially seems to have been placed in an unfavourable light by malevolent critics and bad

translators. Carlyle, on the contrary, behaves very well. To the stupid objection that no virtuous lady could read 'Wilhelm Meister,' he opposes the example of the late Queen of Prussia, who made herself familiar with the book, and was rightly esteemed one of the first women of her time."

Some of the guests came in now, whom Goethe received. He then turned to me again, and I continued.

"Carlyle has, indeed," said I, "studied 'Meister,' and being so thoroughly penetrated with its value, he would like to see it universally circulated,—would like to see every cultivated mind receive similar profit and enjoyment."

Goethe drew me to a window to answer me.

"My dear young friend," said he, "I will confide to you something which may help you on a great deal. My works cannot be popular. He who thinks and strives to make them so is in error. They are not written for the multitude, but only for individuals who desire something congenial, and whose aims are like my own."

He wished to say more; but a young lady who came up interrupted him, and drew him into conversation. I turned to the others, and soon afterwards we sat down to table.

I could pay no attention to the conversation that was going on; Goethe's words were impressed upon me, and entirely occupied my mind.

"Really," thought I, "a writer like him, an intellect so exalted, a nature so comprehensive, how can he be popular? Can even a small part of him be popular?"

even those songs which convivial companies or enamoured maidens sing, and which again are not for others?

“And, rightly regarded, is not this the case with everything extraordinary? Is Mozart, is Raphael popular? and is not the relation of the world towards these great fountains of overflowing spiritual life like that of some dainty person, who is pleased now and then to snatch up a little that may for a while afford higher enjoyment.

“Yes,” I continued, in my own mind, “Goethe is right. He cannot be popular to his full extent; his works are only for individuals who desire something congenial, and whose pursuits are like his own. They are for contemplative natures, who wish to penetrate into the depths of the world and human nature, and follow in his path. They are for those susceptible of passionate enjoyment, who seek in the poet the bliss and woe of the heart. They are for young poets who would learn how to express their feelings, and how to treat a subject artistically. They are for critics, who find there a model for the best rules of judgment, and also for the means of making a criticism interesting and attractive, so that it may be read with pleasure.

“His works are for the artist, inasmuch as they enlighten his mind generally, and teach him particularly what subjects are suited to works of art; what he should use, and what leave aside. They are for the observer of nature, not only because great laws are discovered and taught him, but, still more, because they give him the method by which the intellect must proceed with nature to make her reveal her mysteries.

“In short, all those who are making efforts in

science or art, may be guests at the richly-provided banquet of his works, and in their productions bear witness to the great general source of light and life from which they have drawn."

These and similar thoughts were in my head all dinner-time. I thought of individuals, of many a good German artist, of natural philosophers, poets, and critics, who owed to Goethe a great part of their culture. I thought of intellectual Italians, Frenchmen, and Englishmen, who have their eyes upon him, and who have worked in his spirit.

In the mean while, all around me were jesting and talking, and partaking of the good fare. I spoke now and then a word, but without exactly knowing what I said. A lady put a question to me, to which, it seems, I did not render a very appropriate answer: they all laughed at me.

"Let Eckermann alone," said Goethe. "He is always absent, except when he is at the theatre."

They laughed at me again; but I did not regard it. I felt myself, to-day, peculiarly happy. I blessed my fate, which, after many singular dispensations, had associated me with the few who enjoy the conversation and intimacy of a man whose greatness I had deeply felt only a few moments since, and whom I now had personally before my eyes, in all his amiability.

Biscuits and some very fine grapes were brought for dessert. The latter had been sent from a distance, and Goethe would not say whence they came. He divided them, and handed me a very ripe branch across the table.

"Here, my good friend," said he, "eat these sweets, and much good may they do you."

I highly enjoyed the grapes from Goethe's hand, and was now quite near him both in body and soul.

They talked of the theatre, and of Wolff's great merits, and of what had been done by that excellent artist.

"I know very well," said Goethe, "that our earlier actors learned much from me, but I can properly call none but Wolff my pupil. I will give you an instance, which I am very fond of repeating, to show how thoroughly he was penetrated with my principles, and how fully he acted in my spirit. I was once very angry with Wolff for various reasons. He played one evening, and I was sitting in my box. 'Now,' thought I to myself, 'you can keep a sharp look out upon him; for there is not, to-day, a spark of affection within you, which can speak out for him and excuse him. Wolff acted, and I kept my sharp eye fixed upon him. And how did he act! How safe—how firm he was! It was impossible to find out in him even the shadow of an offence against the rules which I had implanted in him, and I saw that a reconciliation with him was inevitable.'"

(Sup.*) Friday, October 17, 1828.

Goethe has, for some time past, been reading the "Globe" very eagerly, and he often makes this paper the subject of his conversation. The endeavours of Cousin and his school appear to him especially important.

"These men," said he, "are quite on the way to effect an approximation between France and Germany, inasmuch as they form a language which is entirely

fitted to facilitate the interchange of ideas between the two nations."

The "Globe" has also a particular interest for Goethe, because the newest productions in French belles lettres are reviewed, and the freedom of the romantic school, or rather the emancipation from the fetters of unmeaning rules, is often defended in a very animated manner.

"What is the use of the whole lumber of rules belonging to a stiff antiquated time," said he to-day, "and what is the use of all the noise about classical and romantic! The point is for a work to be thoroughly good and then it is sure to be classical."

Monday, October 20, 1828.

Oberbergrath* Næggerath of Bonn, on his return from the meeting of natural philosophers at Berlin, was a very welcome guest to-day at Goethe's table. There was much talk about mineralogy, and the worthy stranger gave us some profound information about the mineralogical phenomena in the neighbourhood of Bonn.

After dinner we went into the room where there is the colossal bust of Juno. Goethe shewed the guests a long slip of paper, with outlines of the frieze of the temple at Phigalia. While we were looking at these, the remark was made that the Greeks, in representing animals, adhered less to nature than to certain conventional rules, and there was an attempt to prove, that in representations of this kind they are inferior to nature,

* Literally "Upper-Mine-Councillor"—a superior officer in a mining office.—*Trans.*

and that their rams, oxen, and horses, as they appear in bas-relief, are often very stiff, shapeless, and imperfect creatures.

“I will not dispute with you about that point,” said Goethe; “but before all things, we must distinguish the time and the artist from which such works proceed. For numbers of masterpieces have been found, in which the Greek artists, in representing animals, have not only equalled, but even far surpassed nature. The English, who understand horses better than any nation in the world, are now compelled to acknowledge that two antique heads of horses are more perfect in their forms than those of any race now existing upon earth.

“These heads are from the best Greek period, and while we are astonished at such works, we should not so much infer that the artists have copied from a more perfect nature than we now possess, as that they themselves had become of some value in the progress of art, so that they turned to nature with their own personal greatness.”

While all this was said, I stood on one side, looking at an engraving with a lady, at one of the tables, and could only lend half an ear to Goethe’s words; but so much the deeper did they sink into my mind.

After the company had gradually departed, and I was alone with Goethe, who stood by the stove, I approached him.

“Your excellency,” said I, “made an excellent remark a little while ago, when you said that the Greeks turned to nature with their own greatness, and I think that we cannot be too deeply penetrated with this maxim.”

“Yes, my good friend,” said Goethe, “all depends upon this; one must *be* something in order to *do* something. Dante seems to us great; but he had the culture of centuries behind him. The house of Rothschild is rich; but it has taken more than one generation to accumulate such treasures. All these things lie deeper than is thought.

“Our worthy artists who imitate the old German school know nothing of all this; they proceed to the imitation of nature with their own personal weakness and artistic incapacity, and fancy they are doing something. They stand below nature. But whoever will produce anything great, must so improve his culture that, like the Greeks, he will be able to elevate the mere trivial actualities of nature to the level of his own mind, and really carry out that which, in natural phenomena, either from internal weakness or external obstacles, remains a mere intention.”

Wednesday, October 22, 1828.

To-day at dinner we talked about ladies, and Goethe expressed himself very beautifully. “Women,” said he, “are silver dishes into which we put golden apples. My idea of women is not abstracted from the phenomena of actual life, but has been born with me, or arisen in me, God knows how. The female characters which I have drawn, have therefore all turned out well; they are all better than could be found in reality.

(Sup.) Thursday, October 23, 1828.

Goethe spoke to-day with great respect of a little paper of the Chancellor's, on the subject of the Grand-

Duke Charles Augustus, which reviews, in a short compass, the active life of this remarkable prince.

“He has been very happy with this little work,” said Goethe; “the materials are brought together with great circumspection and care; then all is animated with the breath of the heartiest love, while at the same time the style is so close that one act follows immediately upon another, and we almost feel a mental giddiness in the contemplation of such fulness of life and action. The Chancellor has also sent his work to Berlin, and received some time ago a highly remarkable letter from Alexander von Humboldt, which I could not read without deep emotion. Humboldt was on the most intimate terms with the Grand-Duke during a long life; which certainly is not to be wondered at, since the profound and highly endowed nature of the Prince was always athirst for fresh knowledge, and Humboldt, with his great universality, was just the man to be always ready with the best and profoundest answer to every question.

“Now, it is a singular fact that the Grand-Duke passed the very last days before his death at Berlin, in almost constant intercourse with Humboldt, and that he was at last able to obtain from his friend the solution of many important problems which lay upon his heart. Further, the circumstance that one of the greatest princes whom Germany had ever possessed had such a man as Humboldt to witness his last days and hours, could not fail of producing a favourable effect. I have made a copy of the letter, and will impart some passages to you.”

Goethe rose and went to his desk, whence he took

the letter, and then reseated himself at the table. He read for some time in silence. I saw tears in his eyes. "Read it for yourself," said he, whilst he handed it to me. He rose and walked up and down the room whilst I read :—

"Who could have been more shocked at the sudden departure of the illustrious deceased," writes Humboldt, "than I, whom he treated during thirty years with such kind distinction, I may say with such sincere predilection. Even here he would have me near him almost every hour ; and as if this great brightness, as with the lofty snow-capped Alps, were the forerunner of departing light, never have I seen the great humane prince more animated, more intelligent, more mild, more sympathizing with the further development of the people, than in the last days when we had him here. I frequently said to my friends, anxiously and full of misgivings, that this animation, this mysterious clearness of intellect, combined with so much bodily weakness, was to me a fearful phenomenon. He himself evidently vacillated between hope of recovery and expectation of the great catastrophe.

"When I saw him at breakfast four-and-twenty hours previously to this, though he was ill and without appetite, he still questioned me cheerfully upon the granite of the shores of the Baltic which had just been brought from Sweden, upon the tails of the comets which might dim our atmosphere, and upon the cause of the extreme severity of the winter on all the eastern coasts.

"When I saw him for the last time, he pressed my hand at my departure, and cheerfully said—' Do you

believe, Humboldt, that Töplitz and all the warm springs are like water artificially heated? We will discuss that at Töplitz, when you come there with the king. You will see that your old kitchen fire will still make me hold together for a while.' Strange! for with such a man everything is of importance.

"In Potsdam, I sat many hours alone with him upon his couch; he drank and slept alternately, then drank again, then rose to write to his consort, and then slept again. He was cheerful, but much exhausted. In the intervals, he overpowered me with the most difficult questions upon physics, astronomy, meteorology, and geognosy; upon the transparency of the nucleus of a comet; upon the atmosphere of the moon; upon the coloured double stars; upon the influence of the spots in the sun upon temperature; upon the appearance of organized forms in the primitive world; and upon the internal warmth of the earth. He slept at intervals during his discourse and mine, was often restless, and then said, mildly and kindly excusing his apparent inattention, 'You see, Humboldt, it is all over with me!'

"Suddenly, he began to talk desultorily upon religious matters. He regretted the increase of pietism, and the connection of this species of fanaticism with a tendency towards political absolutism, and a suppression of all free mental action. 'Then,' he exclaimed, 'there are false-hearted fellows who think that by means of pietism they can make themselves agreeable to princes, and obtain places and ribbons. They have smuggled themselves in with a poetical predilection for the middle ages.'

“His anger soon abated, and he said that he now found much consolation in the Christian religion. ‘It is a humane doctrine,’ said he, ‘but has been distorted from the beginning. The first Christians were the free-thinkers among the ultras.’”

I expressed to Goethe my delight at this noble letter. “You see,” said Goethe, “what an extraordinary man he was. But how good it is of Humboldt to have taken up these last few traits, which may certainly serve as a symbol in which the whole nature of this eminent prince is reflected. Yes, such he was!—I can say it better than any one, for no one knew him so thoroughly as I did. But is it not lamentable that there is no distinction, and that such a man must depart from us so early! Had he staid with us only a poor century more, how, in his high position, could he have advanced his age! But mark this. The world will not attain its goal so speedily as we expect and desire. There are always retarding demons, who start in opposition at every point, so that although the whole progresses, it is but slowly. Only live on, and you will find that I am right.”

“The development of mankind,” said I, “appears to be laid out as a work for thousands of years.”

“Perhaps millions,” said Goethe—“who knows? But let mankind last as long as it may, it will never lack obstacles to give it trouble, and never lack the pressure of necessity to develop its powers.

“Men will become more clever and more acute, but not better, happier, and stronger in action, or at least only at epochs. I foresee the time when God will have no more joy in them, but will break up every-

thing for a renewed creation. I am certain that everything is planned to this end, and that the time and hour are already fixed in the distant future for the occurrence of this renovating epoch. But a long time will elapse first, and we may still for thousands and thousands of years amuse ourselves in all sorts of ways on this dear old surface."

Goethe was in a particularly good and elevated mood. He ordered a bottle of wine, and filled for himself and me. Our conversation again turned upon the Grand-Duke Charles Augustus.

"You see," said Goethe, "how his extraordinary mind embraced the whole kingdom of nature. Physics, astronomy, geognosy, meteorology, vegetable and animal formations of the primitive world, and everything of the sort;—he had a mind for all and took interest in them all. He was eighteen years of age when I came to Weimar; but even then the buds showed what the tree would one day become. He soon attached himself most intimately to me, and took a deep interest in all that I did. It was advantageous to our intercourse that I was ten years older than he. He sat whole evenings with me, in earnest conversation on the subjects of art and nature, and other excellent topics. We often sat together deep into the night, and not unfrequently we both fell asleep on one sofa. We worked together for fifty years, and it is no wonder that we at last achieved something."

"So thorough a cultivation as the Grand-Duke seems to have received is probably rare among princes."

"Very seldom!" returned Goethe. "There are,

indeed, many who are capable of conversing very cleverly on every subject, but they have it not at heart, and only dabble upon the surface. And it is no wonder, if one considers the frightful dissipations and distractions which accompany a court life, and to which a young prince is exposed. He must take notice of everything ; he must know a bit of this and a bit of that. Under such circumstances, nothing can take root ; and it requires a strong natural foundation not to end in smoke in the face of such constant demands. The Grand-Duke was indeed a born great man ; and in this all is said, and all is done."

"With all his highly scientific and intellectual tendencies," said I, "he appears to have understood the art of government."

"He was a man of one piece," returned Goethe, "and with him everything flowed from one single great source. And as the whole was good, so the individual parts were good, let him do as he might. But he possessed three especially useful qualities for carrying on a government. He had the talent of discriminating between minds and characters, and of placing every one in his proper place. That was a great point. Then he possessed another gift as great, if not greater : he was animated by the noblest benevolence, by the purest philanthropy, and with his whole soul aimed only at what was best. He always thought first of the happiness of his country, and only at last a little of himself. His hand was always ready and open to meet noble men, and to assist in promoting worthy objects. There was a great deal that was divine in him. He would have liked to promote the happiness of all mankind.

Love engenders love, and one who is loved can easily govern.

“Thirdly, he was greater than those who surrounded him. After ten voices which he heard on a certain occasion, he perceived an eleventh, and that a better one, in himself. Strange whispers passed him unheeded, and he was not easily led to commit anything unprincipally, by setting aside real merit on which a doubt had been cast, and taking worthless ragamuffins under his protection. He surveyed everything himself, judged for himself, and had in all cases the surest basis in himself. Moreover, he was of a silent nature, and his words were always followed by action.”

“How it grieves me,” said I, “that I knew nothing of him but his exterior; still that made a deep impression upon me. I see him still in his old drosky, in a worn-out grey cloak and military cap, smoking a cigar, as he drove to the chase, with his favourite hound by his side. I have never seen him ride otherwise than in this ugly old drosky. And never with more than two horses. An equipage with six horses, and coats with orders, do not seem to have been much according to his taste.”

“That sort of thing,” returned Goethe, “is now almost out of date with princes generally. The only point now is what a man weighs in the scale of humanity; all the rest is nought. A coat with a star, and a chariot with six horses, at all events, imposes on the rudest multitude only, and scarcely that. Then the Grand-Duke’s old drosky barely hung upon springs. Whoever rode with him had to put up with some desperate shocks. But that was in his way; he

liked the rough and inconvenient, and was an enemy to all effeminacy."

"We see traces of that in your poem of 'Ilmenau,'" said I, "in which you appear to have drawn him to the life."

"He was then very young," returned Goethe, "and we certainly led rather a mad life. He was like a fine wine, still in a high state of fermentation. He did not know how to expend his powers, and we often nearly broke our necks. Fagging all day long on horseback, over hedges and ditches, through rivers, up hill and down hill; and then at night encamping in the open air, by a fire in the wood;—this was what he liked. To have inherited a dukedom was in him nothing; but to have taken one by storm, he would have considered something.

"The poem of 'Ilmenau,'" continued Goethe, "contains, as an episode, an epoch which, in the year 1783, when I wrote it, had happened many years before, so that I could describe myself in it as an historical personage, and could hold a conversation with the self of former years. There occurs in it, as you know, a nightly scene after one of the break-neck chases in the mountain. We had built ourselves at the foot of a rock some little huts, and covered them with fir branches, that we might pass the night on dry ground. Before the huts we burned several fires, and we cooked and spread out the produce of the chase. Knebel, whose tobacco pipe was not then cold, sat next to the fire, and enlivened the company with various dry jokes, whilst the wine-flask passed from hand to hand. Sechendorf the slender, with his long thin limbs, had

comfortably stretched himself out by the trunk of a tree, and was humming all sorts of poetics. On one side, in a similar little hut, lay the Grand-Duke, in a deep slumber. I myself sat before him, by the glimmering light of the coals, absorbed in various grave thoughts, suffering accessions of regret for the mischief which had been done by my writings. Knebel and Sechen-dorf do not appear to me to be badly drawn, neither is the young prince, in the gloomy impetuosity of his twentieth year.

‘ He hurries onwards, inconsiderate,
No rock appears too steep, no bridge too small,
Ghastly mischances ever on him wait,
And into Pain’s hard arms he oft must fall.
The wild unruly impulse in his breast,
Now here, now there, still sets him roving ;
At last he takes his gloomy rest,
When weary of his gloomy moving.
Joyless, though feeling no control,
Sullen, though wild in happiest days,
Wounded and fagged in body and in soul,
On a hard couch his frame he lays ’

“ That is he exactly. Not the slightest touch is exaggerated. Nevertheless, the Duke soon worked himself out of this ‘ storm-and-pressure period,’* into a state of useful clearness, so that on his birthday, in the year 1783, I could well remind him of this image of his earlier days.

“ I will not deny that in the beginning he caused me

* The “ storm-and-pressure (Sturm und Drang) period” of German literature, which takes its name from one of Klinger’s plays, is that period of unfettered impulse which is particularly represented by Schiller’s “Robbers.”—*Trans.*

much trouble and anxiety. Yet his noble nature soon cleared itself, and formed itself to the highest degree of perfection, so that it was a pleasure to live and act with him."

"In these early times you made a tour with him through Switzerland," remarked I.

"He was fond of travelling altogether," returned Goethe, "not so much for the sake of amusing himself as to have his eyes and ears open, and notice whatever was good and useful, in order to introduce it into his own country. On this account, agriculture, cattle-breeding, and industry altogether, are infinitely indebted to him. His tendencies were not generally personal or egotistical, but of a purely productive kind; and, indeed, productive for the general good. He has thus acquired a name which has extended far beyond this little country."

"His careless, simple exterior," said I, "appeared to intimate that he did not seek renown, and that he set little store by it. It seemed as if he had become renowned without any effort of his own, merely by means of his own passive excellence."

"There is something peculiar in that," returned Goethe. "Wood burns because it has the proper stuff for that purpose in it; and a man becomes renowned because he has the necessary stuff in him. Renown is not to be sought, and all pursuit of it is vain. A person may, indeed, by skilful conduct and various artificial means, make a sort of name for himself. But if the inner jewel is wanting, all is vanity, and will not last a day. Just the same is it with popular favour. He did not seek it, and he by no

means flattered people ; but the nation loved him, because it felt that he had a heart for it."

Goethe then mentioned the other members of the Grand-Duke's family, and how the mark of a noble character ran through them all. He spoke of the benevolence of the present Regent, and of the great hopes which were entertained of the young Prince, and expatiated with evident love upon the rare qualities of the now reigning Princess, who, in the noblest spirit, was applying great means to alleviate sufferings and to bring forth germs of goodness. "She has at all times been a good angel to her country," said he, "and she becomes so more and more the longer she is united to it. I have known the Grand-Duchess since the year 1805, and have had many opportunities of admiring her mind and character. She is one of the best and most distinguished women of our time, and would be so if she were not a princess. And this is the great point, that even when the purple has been laid aside, much that is great, nay, what is really the best, still remains."

We then spoke of the unity of Germany, and in what sense it was possible and desirable.

"I am not uneasy," said Goethe, "about the unity of Germany ; our good high roads and future railroads will of themselves do their part. But, above all, may Germany be *one* in love ! and may it always be *one* against the foreign foe ! May it be *one*, so that German dollars and groschen may be of equal value throughout the whole empire ! *one*, so that my travelling-chest may pass unopened through all the six-and-thirty states ! May it be *one*, so that the town passport of a citizen of

Weimar may not be considered insufficient, like that of a mere *foreigner*, by the frontier officer of a large neighbouring state ! May there be no more talk about inland and outland among the German states ! In fine, may Germany be *one* in weight and measure, in trade and commerce, and a hundred similar things which I will not name !

“ But if we imagine that the unity of Germany consists in this, that the very great empire should have a single great capital, and that this one great capital would conduce to the development of great individual talent, or to the welfare of the great mass of the people, we are in error.

“ A state has been justly compared to a living body with many limbs, and thus the capital of a state may be compared to the heart, from which life and prosperity flow to the individual members, near and far. But if the members be very distant from the heart, the life that flows to them will become weaker and weaker. A clever Frenchman, I think Dupin, has sketched a chart of the state of culture in France, and has exhibited the greater or less enlightenment of the different departments by a lighter or darker colour. Now, some departments, particularly in the southern provinces remote from the capital, are represented by a perfectly black colour, as a sign of the great darkness which prevails there. But would that be the case if *la belle France*, instead of one great focus, had ten foci, whence life and light might proceed.

“ Whence is Germany great, but by the admirable culture of the people, which equally pervades all parts of the kingdom ? But does not this proceed from the

various seats of government, and do not these foster and support it? Suppose, for centuries past, we had had in Germany only the two capitals, Vienna and Berlin, or only one of these, I should like to see how it would have fared with German culture, or even with that generally diffused opulence which goes hand in hand with culture. Germany has about twenty universities distributed about the whole empire, and about a hundred public libraries similarly distributed. There is also a great number of collections of art, and collections of objects belonging to all the kingdoms of nature; for every prince has taken care to bring around him these useful and beautiful objects. There are gymnasia and schools for arts and industry in abundance,—nay, there is scarcely a German village without its school. And how does France stand with respect to this last point!

“Then look at the quantity of German theatres, the number of which exceeds seventy, and which are not to be despised as supporters and promoters of a higher cultivation of the people. In no country is the taste for music and singing, and the practice of it so widely spread, as in Germany; and even that is something!

“And now think of such cities as Dresden, Munich, Stuttgart, Cassel, Brunswick, Hanover, and the like; think of the great elements of life comprised within these cities; think of the effect which they have upon the neighbouring provinces; and ask yourself if all this would have been the case if they had not for a long time been the residences of princes?

“Frankfort, Bremen, Hamburg, and Lubeck, are great and brilliant; their effect upon the prosperity of

Germany is incalculable. But would they remain what they are, if they lost their own sovereignty and became incorporated with any great German kingdom as a provincial town? I see reason to doubt this."

Tuesday, November 18, 1828.

Goethe spoke of a new article in the "Edinburgh Review." "It is a pleasure to me," said he, "to see the elevation and excellence to which the English critics now rise. There is not a trace of their former pedantry, but its place is occupied by great qualities. In the last article—the one on German literature—you will find the following remarks:—'There are people among poets who have a tendency always to occupy themselves with things which another likes to drive from his mind.' What say you to this? There we know at once where we are, and how we have to classify a great number of our most modern literati."

(Sup.*) Wednesday, December 3, 1828.

To-day, I had with Goethe a pleasant joke of a very particular kind. Madame Duval, of Centigny, in the Canton of Geneva, who is very skilful in preserving, had sent me, as the produce of her art, some citrons, for the Grand-Duchess and Goethe; fully convinced that her preserves as far surpassed all others, as Goethe's poems did those of most of his German contemporaries.

The eldest daughter of this lady had long wished for Goethe's autograph; it therefore occurred to me that it would be a good plan to decoy Goethe into writing

a poem for my young friend, by using the citrons as a sweet bait.

With the air of a diplomatist charged with an important mission I went to him, and treated with him as one power with another, stipulating for an original poem in his own handwriting, as the price of the offered citrons. Goethe laughed at this joke, which he took in very good part, and immediately asked for the citrons, which he found excellent. A few hours afterwards, I was much surprised to see the following verses arrive as a Christmas present to my young friend :—

“ That must be a land of bliss
Where the citrons grow like this!
And where ladies find employment
Sweetening them for our enjoyment,” &c.

When I saw him again he joked about the great advantages which he could now derive from his poetic profession, whereas in his youth he could not find a purchaser for his “Goetz von Berlichingen.” “I adopt your treaty of commerce,” said he; “when my citrons are eaten up do not forget to order some more; I will be punctual with my poetic payment.”

Tuesday, December 16, 1828.

I dined to-day with Goethe alone, in his work-room. We talked on various literary topics.

“The Germans,” said he, “cannot cease to be Philistines. They are now squabbling about some verses, which are printed both in Schiller’s works and mine, and fancy it is important to ascertain which really belong to Schiller and which to me; as if anything could be gained by the investigation—as if the

existence of the things were not enough. Friends, such as Schiller and I, intimate for years, with the same interests, in habits of daily intercourse, and under reciprocal obligations, live so completely into one another, that it is hardly possible to decide to which of the two the particular thoughts belong.

"We have made many distiches together; sometimes I gave the thought, and Schiller made the verse; sometimes the contrary was the case; sometimes he made one line, and I the other. What matters the mine and thine? One must be a thorough Philistine, indeed, to attach the slightest importance to the solution of such questions."

"Something similar," said I, "often happens in the literary world, when people, for instance, doubt the originality of this or that celebrated man, and seek to trace out the sources from whence he obtained his cultivation."

"That is very ridiculous," said Goethe; "we might as well question a strong man about the oxen, sheep, and swine, which he has eaten, and which have given him strength."

"We are indeed born with faculties; but we owe our development to a thousand influences of the great world, from which we appropriate to ourselves what we can and what is suitable to us. I owe much to the Greeks and French; I am infinitely indebted to Shakspeare, Sterne, and Goldsmith; but in saying this I do not show the sources of my culture; that would be an endless as well as an unnecessary task. What is important is to have a soul which loves truth, and receives it wherever it finds it."

“ Besides, the world is now so old, so many eminent men have lived and thought for thousands of years, that there is little new to be discovered or expressed. Even my theory of colours is not entirely new. Plato, Leonardo da Vinci, and many other excellent men, have before me found and expressed the same thing in a detached form ; my merit is, that I have found it also, that I have said it again, and that I have striven to bring the truth once more into a confused world.

“ The truth must be repeated over and over again, because error is repeatedly preached among us, not only by individuals, but by the masses. In periodicals and cyclopædias, in schools and universities ; everywhere, in fact, error prevails, and is quite easy in the feeling that it has a decided majority on its side.

“ Often, too, people teach truth and error together, and stick to the latter. Thus, a short time ago, I read in an English cyclopædia the doctrine of the origin of Blue. First came the correct view of Leonardo da Vinci, but then followed, as quietly as possible, the error of Newton, coupled with remarks that this was to be adhered to because it was the view generally adopted.”

I could not help laughing with surprise when I heard this. “ Every wax-taper,” I said, “ every illuminated cloud of smoke from the kitchen, that has anything dark behind it, every morning mist, when it lies before a steady spot, daily convinces me of the origin of blue colour, and makes me comprehend the blueness of the sky. What the Newtonians mean when they say that the air has the property of absorbing other colours, and of repelling blue alone, I

cannot at all understand, nor do I see what use or pleasure is to be derived from a doctrine in which all thought stands still, and all sound observation completely vanishes."

"My good innocent friend," said Goethe, "these people do not care a jot about thoughts and observations. They are satisfied if they have only words which they can pass as current, as was well shown, and not ill-expressed by my own Mephistophiles:—

"Mind, above all, you stick to words,
Thus through the safe gate you will go
Into the fane of certainty;
For when ideas begin to fail
A word will aptly serve your turn," &c.

Goethe recited this passage laughing, and seemed altogether in the best humour. "It is a good thing," said he, "that all is already in print, and I shall go on printing as long as I have anything to say against false doctrine, and those who disseminate it.

"We have now excellent men rising up in natural science," he continued, after a pause, "and I am glad to see them. Others begin well, but afterwards fall off; their predominating subjectivity leads them astray. Others, again, set too much value on facts, and collect an infinite number, by which nothing is proved. On the whole, there is a want of originating mind to penetrate back to the original phenomena, and master the particulars that make their appearance."

A short visit interrupted our discourse, but when we were again alone the conversation returned to poetry, and I told Goethe that I had of late been once more studying his little poems, and had dwelt especially

upon two of them, viz., the ballad* about the children and the old man, and the "Happy Couple" (*die glücklichen Gatten*).

"I myself set some value on these two poems," said Goethe, "although the German public have hitherto not been able to make much out of them."

"In the ballad," I said, "a very copious subject is brought into a very limited compass, by means of all sorts of poetical forms and artifices, among which I especially praise the expedient of making the old man tell the children's past history down to the point where the present moment comes in, and the rest is developed before our eyes."

"I carried the ballad a long time about in my head," said Goethe, "before I wrote it down. Whole years of reflection are comprised in it, and I made three or four trials before I could reduce it to its present shape."

"The poem of the 'Happy Couple,' continued Goethe, "is likewise rich in *motives*; whole landscapes and passages of human life appear in it, warmed by the sunlight of a charming spring sky, which is diffused over the whole."

"I have always liked that poem," said Goethe, "and I am glad that you have regarded it with particular interest. The ending of the whole pleasantry with a double christening is, I think, pretty enough."

We then came to the "Bürger-general" (Citizen-general); with respect to which I said that I had been lately reading this piece with an Englishman, and that we had both felt the strongest desire to see it repre-

* This poem is simply entitled "Ballade," and begins "Herein, O du Guter! du Alter herein!"—*Trans.*

sented on the stage. "As far as the spirit of the work is concerned," said I, "there is nothing antiquated about it; and with respect to the details of dramatic development, there is not a touch that does not seem designed for the stage."

"It was a very good piece in its time," said Goethe, "and caused us many a pleasant evening. It was, indeed, excellently cast, and had been so admirably studied that the dialogue moved along as glibly as possible. Malcomi played Märten, and nothing could be more perfect."

"The part of Schnaps," said I, "seems to me no less felicitous. Indeed, I should not think there were many better or more thankful parts in the *repertoire*. There is in this personage, as in the whole piece, a clearness, an actual presence, to the utmost extent that can be desired for a theatre. The scene where he comes in with the knapsack, and produces the things one after another, where he puts the *moustache* on Märten, and decks himself with the cap of liberty, uniform, and sword, is among the best."

"This scene," said Goethe, "used always to be very successful on our stage. Then the knapsack, with the articles in it, had really an historical existence. I found it in the time of the Revolution, on my travels along the French border, when the emigrants, on their flight, had passed through, and one of them might have lost it or thrown it away. The articles it contained were just the same as in the piece. I wrote the scene upon it, and the knapsack, with all its appurtenances, was always introduced, to the no small delight of our actors."

The question, whether the 'Bürger-general' could still be played with any interest or profit, was for a while the subject of our conversation.

Goethe then asked about my progress in French literature, and I told him that I still took up Voltaire from time to time, and that the great talent of this man gave me the purest delight.

"I still know but little of him," said I; "I keep to his short poems addressed to persons, which I read over and over again, and which I cannot lay aside."

"Indeed," said Goethe, "all is good which is written by so great a genius as Voltaire, though I cannot excuse all his profanity. But you are right to give so much time to those little poems addressed to persons; they are unquestionably among the most charming of his works. There is not a line which is not full of thought, clear, bright, and graceful."

"And we see," said I, "his relations to all the great and mighty of the world, and remark with pleasure the distinguished position taken by himself, inasmuch as he seems to feel himself equal to the highest, and we never find that any majesty can embarrass his free mind even for a moment."

"Yes," said Goethe, "he bore himself like a man of rank. And with all his freedom and audacity, he ever kept within the limits of strict propriety, which is, perhaps, saying still more. I may cite the Empress of Austria as an authority in such matters; she has repeatedly assured me, that in those poems of Voltaire's, there is no trace of crossing the line of *convenance*."

"Does your excellency," said I, "remember the short poem in which he makes to the Princess of

Prussia, afterwards Queen of Sweden, a pretty declaration of love, by saying that he dreamed of being elevated to the royal dignity?"

"It is one of his best," said Goethe, and he recited the lines—

"Je vous aimais, princesse, et j'osais vous le dire ;
Les Dieux à mon reveil ne m'ont pas tout oté,
Je n'ai perdu que mon empire."

"How pretty that is ! And never did poet have his talent so completely at command every moment as Voltaire. I remember an anecdote, when he had been for some time on a visit to Madame du Chatelet. Just as he was going away, and the carriage was standing at the door, he received a letter from a great number of young girls in a neighbouring convent, who wished to play the 'Death of Julius Cæsar' on the birth-day of their abbess, and begged him to write them a prologue. The case was too delicate for a refusal ; so Voltaire at once called for pen and paper, and wrote the desired prologue, standing, upon the mantel-piece. It is a poem of perhaps twenty lines, thoroughly digested, finished, perfectly suited to the occasion, and, in short, of the very best class."

"I am very desirous to read it," said I.

"I doubt," said Goethe, "whether you will find it in your collection. It has only lately come to light, and, indeed, he wrote hundreds of such poems, of which many may still be scattered about among private persons."

"I found of late, a passage in Lord Byron," said I, "from which I perceived with delight, that even Byron

had an extraordinary esteem for Voltaire. We may see in his works how much he liked to read, study, and make use of Voltaire."

"Byron," said Goethe, "knew too well where anything was to be got, and was too clever not to draw from this universal source of light."

The conversation then turned entirely upon Byron, and several of his works, and Goethe found occasion to repeat many of his former expressions of admiration for that great talent.

"To all that your Excellency says of Byron," said I, "I agree from the bottom of my heart ; but, however great and remarkable that poet may be as a talent, I very much doubt whether a decided gain for *pure human culture* is to be derived from his writings."

"There, I must contradict you," said Goethe ; "the audacity and grandeur of Byron must certainly tend towards culture. We should take care not to be always looking for it in the decidedly pure and moral. Everything that is great promotes cultivation as soon as we are aware of it."

(Sup.) Sunday, December 21, 1828.

Last night I had a strange dream, which I related to Goethe this evening, and which he thought very pleasant. I imagined myself in a foreign town, in a broad street, towards the south-east, where I stood with a crowd of men, and watched the heavens, which appeared covered with a light mist, and shone with the brightest yellow. Every one was full of expectation as to what would happen, when two fiery points appeared, which, like meteor stones, fell to the ground before us with a crash, not far from the spot where we

were standing. We hastened to see what had fallen, and behold! there stood before me Faust and Mephistopheles. I was both delighted and astonished, and joining them as acquaintance, walked along with them in cheerful conversation, turning the next corner of a street.

What we said I do not remember, yet the impression of their personal appearance was so peculiar, that it is still perfectly distinct to me, and not easily to be forgotten. Both were younger than one is accustomed to consider them; and, indeed, Mephistopheles might have been about one-and-twenty years of age, and Faust about seven-and-twenty. The former appeared thoroughly gentlemanlike, cheerful, and free; and stepped along as lightly as any Mercury. His countenance was handsome, without malice; and one would not have discerned that he was the devil, had it not been for two elegant horns which sprouted from his youthful forehead, and turned sideways, just as a beautiful growth of hair raises itself, and then turns to each side. When, as we went along, Faust, in speaking, turned his countenance towards me, I was astonished at the peculiarity of the expression; the noblest moral feeling and benevolence spoke in every feature, as the prevailing original character of his nature. He appeared as if, in spite of his youth, all human joys, sorrows, and thoughts had already passed through his soul, so care-worn was his countenance. He was rather pale, and so attractive that one could not look at him enough. I endeavoured to impress his features upon my mind, in order to draw them. Faust walked on the right, Mephistopheles between us two, and I still retain the

impression of the manner in which Faust turned his fine peculiar countenance, in order to speak with Mephistopheles or with me. We went through the streets, and the crowd dispersed without taking further notice of us.

CONVERSATIONS OF GOETHE.

1829.

1829.

Wednesday, February 4, 1829.

“I have continued to read Schubart,” said Goethe. “He is, indeed, a remarkable man, and he says much that is excellent, if we translate it into our own language. The chief tendency of his book is to show that there is a point of view beyond the sphere of philosophy,—namely, that of common-sense; and that art and science, independently of philosophy, and by means of a free action of natural human powers, have always thriven best. This is grist for our mill. I have always kept myself free from philosophy. The common-sense point of view was also mine; and hence Schubart confirms what I myself have been saying and doing all my life.

“The only thing I cannot commend in him is this, that he knows certain things better than he will confess, and does not therefore go quite honestly to work. Like Hegel, he would bring the Christian religion into philosophy, though it really has nothing to do with it. Christianity has a might of its own, by which dejected, suffering humanity is re-elevated from time to time, and when we grant it this power, it is raised above all philosophy, and needs no support therefrom.

Neither does the philosopher need the countenance of religion to prove certain doctrines ; as, for instance, eternal duration. Man should believe in immortality ; he has a right to this belief ; it corresponds with the wants of his nature, and he may believe in the promises of religion. But if the philosopher tries to deduce the immortality of the soul from a legend, that is very weak and inefficient. To me, the eternal existence of my soul is proved from my idea of activity ; if I work on incessantly till my death, nature is bound to give me another form of existence when the present one can no longer sustain my spirit."

My heart, at these words, beat with admiration and love.

"Never," thought I, "was a doctrine spoken more inciting to noble deeds than this. For who will not work and act indefatigably to the end of his days, when he finds therein the pledge of an eternal life?"

Goethe had a portfolio brought, full of drawings and engravings. After he had looked at some in silence, he showed me a fine engraving after a picture of Ostade's.

"Here," said he, "you have the scene of our good-man and goodwife."

I looked at the engraving with much pleasure. I saw the interior of a peasant's dwelling, with kitchen, parlour, and bed-room, all in one. Man and wife sat opposite one another ; the wife spinning, the husband winding yarn ; a child at their feet. In the background was a bed, and everywhere there was nothing but the rudest and most necessary household utensils. The door led at once into the open air. This idea of

a happy marriage in a very limited condition was perfectly conveyed by this engraving; comfort, content, and a certain luxuriance in the loving emotions of matrimony, were expressed in the faces of both man and wife, as they looked upon one another.

“The longer one looks,” said I, “at this picture, the happier one feels; it has quite a peculiar charm.”

“It is the charm of sensuality,” said Goethe, “with which no art can dispense, and which in subjects of this kind reigns in all its fulness. On the other hand, in works of a higher kind, when the artist goes into the ideal, it is difficult to keep up the proper degree of sensuality, so as not to become dry and cold. Then youth or age may be favourable or impeding, and hence the artist should reflect on his age, and select his subjects accordingly. I succeeded with my ‘Iphigenia’ and ‘Tasso,’ because I was young enough to penetrate and animate the ideal of the stuff with sensual feeling. At my present age, such ideal subjects would no longer be suited to me, and I do right in selecting those which comprise within themselves a certain degree of sensuality. If the Genasts stay here, I shall write two pieces for you, both in one act and in prose. One will be of the most cheerful kind, and end with a wedding; the other will be shocking and terrible, and two corpses will be on the stage at the termination. The latter proceeds from Schiller’s time, who wrote a scene of it at my request. I have long thought over both these subjects, and they are so completely present to my mind, that I could dictate either of them in a week, as I did my ‘Bürger-general.’”

“Do so,” said I, “write the two pieces at all events;

it will be a recreation to you after the "Wanderjahre," and will operate like a little journey. And how pleased the world would be, if, contrary to the expectation of every one, you did something more for the stage."

"As I said," continued Goethe, "if the Genasts stay here, I am not sure that I shall not indulge in this little pleasantry. But without this prospect there is but small inducement; for a play upon paper is nought. The poet must know the means with which he has to work, and must adapt his characters to the actors who are to play them. If I can reckon upon Genast and his wife, and take, besides, La Roche, Herr Winterberger, and Madame Seidel, I know what I have to do, and can be certain that my intentions will be carried out.

"Writing for the stage," he continued, "is something peculiar, and he who does not understand it thoroughly, had better leave it alone. Every one thinks that an interesting fact will appear interesting on the boards,—nothing of the kind! Things may be very pretty to read, and very pretty to think about; but as soon as they are put upon the stage the effect is quite different, and that which has charmed us in the closet will probably fall flat on the boards. If any one reads my 'Hermann and Dorothea,' he thinks it might be brought out at the theatre. Töpfer has been inveigled into the experiment; but what is it, what effect does it produce, especially if it is not played in a first-rate manner, and who can say that it is in every respect a good piece? Writing for the stage is a trade that one must understand, and requires a talent that one must possess. Both are uncommon, and where they are not combined, we shall scarcely have any good result."

Monday, February 9, 1829.

Goethe talked of the "Wahlverwandtschaften," especially remarking, that a person whom he had never seen or known in his life had supposed the character of Mittler to be meant for himself.

"There must," said he, "be some truth in the character, and it must have existed more than once in the world. Indeed, there is not a line in the 'Wahlverwandtschaften' that is not taken from my own experience, and there is more in it than can be gathered by any one from a first reading."

Tuesday, February 10, 1829.

I found Goethe surrounded by maps and plans referring to the building of the Bremen harbour, for which great undertaking he showed an especial interest.

There was then much talk about Merck, and Goethe read me a poetical epistle written from Merck to Wieland in 1776, in very spirited but somewhat hard, doggrel verse (Knüttelverse). The lively production is especially directed against Jacobi, whom Wieland seems to have over-estimated in a critique in the *Merkur*—a fault which Merck cannot pardon.

We then talked of the state of culture at the time, and how difficult it was to emerge from the so-called storm-and-pressure period to a higher culture; of his first years in Wiemar; of the poetic talent in conflict with the reality, which he, from his position at court, and the various sorts of service demanded of him, was, for his own higher advantage, obliged to encounter. Hence nothing poetical of importance was produced

during the first ten years. He read several fragments, and showed how he was saddened by love affairs, and how his father always was impatient of the court-life.

Then we came to the advantage that he did not change his place of abode, and was not obliged to go twice through the same experience; then came his flight to Italy, in order to revive his poetic power,—the superstitious fancy that he would not succeed if any one knew about it, and the profound secrecy in consequence; how he wrote to the Grand Duke from Rome, and returned from Italy with great requisitions upon himself.

Next we talked of the Duchess Amelia—a perfect princess, with perfectly sound sense, and an inclination for the enjoyment of life. She was very fond of Goethe's mother, and wished her to come to Weimar, but he opposed it.

Then about the first beginnings of "Faust."—" 'Faust' sprang up at the same time with 'Werther.' I brought it with me in 1775 to Weimar; I had written it on letter-paper, and had not made an erasure, for I took care not to write down a line that was not worthy to remain."

Wednesday, February 11, 1829.

Oberbau-Director Coudray dined with me at Goethe's house. He spoke much of the Female School of Industry and the Orphan's Institute, as the best establishments in their kind of this country. The first was founded by the Grand Duchess; the latter by the Grand Duke, Charles Augustus. Much was said about theatrical decoration and road-making. Coudray showed Goethe a sketch for a prince's chapel. With

respect to the place of the ducal chair, Goethe made some objections, to which Coudray yielded.

Soret came after dinner. Goethe showed us once more the pictures of Herr von Reutern.

Thursday, February 12, 1829.

Goethe read me the thoroughly noble poem, "Kein Wesen kann zu nichts zerfallen" (No being can dissolve to nothing), which he had lately written.

"I wrote this poem," said he, "in contradiction to my lines—

'Denn alles muss zu nichts zerfallen
Wenn es im Seyn beharren will,' &c.

'For all must melt away to nothing
Would it continue still to be ;'

which are stupid, and which my Berlin friends, on the occasion of the late assembly of natural philosophers, set up in golden letters, to my annoyance."

The conversation turned on the great mathematician, Lagrange, whose excellent character Goethe highly extolled.

"He was a good man," said he, "and on that very account, a great man. For when a good man is gifted with talent, he always works morally for the salvation of the world, as poet, philosopher, artist, or in whatever way it may be.

"I am glad," continued Goethe, "that you had an opportunity yesterday of knowing Coudray better. He says little in general society, but, here among ourselves, you have seen what an excellent mind and character reside in the man. He had, at first, much opposition to encounter, but he has now fought through it all,

and enjoys the entire confidence and favour of the court. Coudray is one of the most skilful architects of our time. He has adhered to me and I to him, and this has been of service to us both. If I had but known him fifty years ago !”

We then talked about Goethe's own architectural knowledge. I remarked that he must have acquired much in Italy.

“Italy gave me an idea of earnestness and greatness,” said he, “but no practical skill. The building of the castle here in Weimar advanced me more than anything. I was obliged to assist, and even to make drawings of entablatures. I had a certain advantage over the professional people, because I was superior to them in intention.”

We talked of Zelter.

“I have a letter from him,” said Goethe, “in which he complains that the performance of the oratorio of the Messiah was spoiled for him by one of his female scholars, who sang an aria too weakly and sentimentally. Weakness is a characteristic of our age. My hypothesis is, that it is a consequence of the efforts made in Germany to get rid of the French. Painters, natural philosophers, sculptors, musicians, poets, with but few exceptions, all are weak, and the general mass is no better.”

“Yet I do not give up the hope,” said I, “of seeing suitable music composed for ‘Faust.’”

“Quite impossible !” said Goethe. “The awful and repulsive passages which must occasionally occur, are not in the style of the time. The music should be like that of Don Juan. Mozart should have

composed for 'Faust.' Meyerbeer would, perhaps, be capable ; but he would not touch anything of the kind ;* he is too much engaged with the Italian theatres."

Afterwards,—I do not recollect in connection to what —Goethe made the following important remark :—

"All that is great and skilful exists with the minority. There have been ministers who have had both king and people against them, and have carried out their great plans alone. It is not to be imagined that reason can ever be popular. Passions and feelings may become popular ; but reason always remains the sole property of a few eminent individuals."

Friday, February 13, 1829.

Dined with Goethe alone.

"After I have finished the 'Wanderjahre,' " said he, "I shall turn to botany again to continue the translation with Soret ; I only fear it may lead me too far, and at last prove an incubus. Great secrets still lie hidden ; much I know, and of much I have an intimation. I will confide something to you that will sound odd.

"The plant goes from knot to knot, closing at last with the flower and the seed. In the animal kingdom it is not otherwise. The caterpillar and the tape-worm goes from knot to knot, and at last forms a head. With the higher animals and man, the vertebral bones grow one upon another, and terminate with the head, in which the powers are concentrated.

* It must be borne in mind that this was said before the appearance of "Robert le Diable," which was first produced in Paris, in November 1831.
—*Trans.*

“ With corporations it is the same as with individuals. The bees, a series of individuals, connected one with another, at least as a community, produce something, which is the conclusion, and may be regarded as the head of the whole—the queen-bee. How this is managed is a mystery, hard to be expressed, but I may say that I have my thoughts upon it.

“ Thus does a nation bring forth its heroes, who stand at the head like demigods to protect and save. Thus were the poetic powers of the French concentrated in Voltaire. Such heads of a nation are great in the generation in which they work ; many last longer, but the greater part have their places supplied by others, and are forgotten by posterity.”

I was pleased with these remarkable thoughts. Goethe then spoke of the natural philosophers, with whom the great point was to prove their opinion.

“ Herr von Buch,” said he, “ has published a new book, which contains a hypothesis in its very title. He has to treat of the blocks of granite which are scattered about in various directions, without our knowing how or whence they came. But as Herr von Buch entertains the hypothesis that such blocks have been cast forth, and shivered by some internal force, he indicates this in his title, by making mention of dispersed (*Zerstreut*) granite-blocks, so that the step to dispersion (*Zerstreuung*) is very short, and the unsuspecting reader finds himself in the toils of error he does not know how.

“ One must be old to see all this, and have money enough to pay for one’s experience. Every *bon mot* that I utter costs me a purseful of money ; half a

million of my private fortune has passed through my hands that I might learn what I know now ;—not only the whole of my father's fortune, but my own salary, and my large literary income for more than fifty years. I have, besides, seen a million and a half expended for great objects by the princes, with whom I have been intimately connected, and in whose progress, success, and failure, I have been interested.

“More than mere talent is required to become a proficient. One must also live amid important circumstances, and have an opportunity of watching the cards held by the players of the age, and of participating in their gain and loss.

“Without my attempts in natural science, I should never have learned to know mankind such as it is. In nothing else can we so closely approach pure contemplation and thought, so closely observe the errors of the senses and of the understanding, the weak and the strong points of character. All is more or less pliant and wavering, is more or less manageable ; but nature understands no jesting ; she is always true, always serious, always severe ; she is always right, and the errors and faults are always those of man. Him, who is incapable of appreciating her, she despises ; and only to the apt, the pure, and the true, does she resign herself, and reveal her secrets.

“The understanding will not reach her ; man must be capable of elevating himself to the highest Reason, to come into contact with the Divinity, which manifests itself in the primitive phenomena (*Urphänomenen*), which dwells behind them, and from which they proceed.

“The divinity works in the living not in the dead ; in the becoming and changing, not in the become and the fixed. Therefore reason, with its tendency towards the divine, has only to do with the becoming, the living ; but understanding with the become, the already fixed, that it may make use of it.

“Hence, mineralogy is a science for the understanding, for practical life ; for its subjects are something dead, which cannot rise again, and there is no room for synthesis.

“The subjects of meteorology are, indeed, something living, which we daily see working and producing ; they presuppose a synthesis, only so many are the co-operating circumstances, that man is not equal to this synthesis, and therefore uselessly wearies himself in observations and inquiries. We steer by hypotheses to imaginary islands ; but the proper synthesis will probably remain an undiscovered country ; and I do not wonder at this, when I consider how difficult it is to obtain any synthesis even in such simple things as plants and colours.”

Sunday, February 15, 1829.

Goethe received me with much praise, on account of my arrangement of the natural-historical aphorisms for the “Wanderjahre.” “Devote yourself to nature,” said he ; “you are born for that purpose, and as the next task, write a compendium of the ‘Theory of Colours.’” We spoke much on this subject.

A chest arrived from the Lower Rhine, containing some antique coins which had been dug up, minerals, small cathedral-figures, and carnival-poems, all of which were unpacked after dinner.

Tuesday, February 17, 1829.

We talked a great deal about Goethe's "Grosskophta."

"Lavater," said Goethe, "believed in Cagliostro and his wonders. When the impostor was unmasked, Lavater maintained, 'This is another Cagliostro, the Cagliostro who did the wonders was a holy person.'

"Lavater was a truly good man, but subject to strong delusions; the whole sole truth was not to his mind; he deceived himself and others. This made a perfect breach between him and me. The last time I saw him was in Zurich; and he did not see me. I was coming in disguise down an avenue; seeing him approach, I stepped aside, and he passed without recognising me. He walked like a crane, and therefore figures as a crane on the Blocksberg."*

I asked whether Lavater had a tendency to observe nature, as we might almost infer from the "Physiognomy."

"Not in the least," said Goethe. "His tendency was wholly towards the moral—the religious. That part of his 'Physiognomy' which relates to the skulls of animals he got from me."

The conversation turned upon the French—upon the lectures of Guizot, Villemain, and Cousin. Goethe spoke with high esteem of the point of view taken by these men; saying that they observed everything on a free and new side, and always went straight to their aim.

"It is," said Goethe, "as if till now we had reached

* That is to say, in the intermezzo in "Faust."—*Trans.*

a garden through roundabout, crooked ways ; these men, however, have been bold and free enough to pull down a wall, and put a door, so that we get at once into the broadest walk of the garden."

From Cousin we passed to Indian philosophy.

"This philosophy," said Goethe, "if what the Englishman tells us is true, has nothing foreign, but, on the contrary, the epochs through which we all pass are repeated in it. When we are children, we are sensualists ; idealists when we love, and attribute to the beloved object qualities which she does not naturally possess. Love wavers ; we doubt her fidelity, and are sceptics before we think of it. The rest of life is indifferent ; we let it go as it will, and end, like the Indian philosophers, with quietism.

"In the German philosophy there are still two great works to do. Kant did an infinite deal, by writing the 'Critique of Pure Reason ;' but the circle is not yet complete. Now, some able man should write the 'Critique of the Senses and Understanding of Man ;' and, if this could be as well done, we should have little more to desire in German philosophy.

"Hegel," continued Goethe, "has written, in the Berlin *Jahrbücher*, a criticism upon Hamann, which I, of late, have read over and over again, and must highly praise. Hegel's judgments as a critic have always been excellent.

"Villemain, too, stands very high in criticism. The French will, indeed, never see another talent to cope with Voltaire ; but we can say of Villemain, that he is so far elevated above Voltaire by his intellectual point of view, as to be able to judge him in his virtues and his faults."

Wednesday, February 18, 1829.

We talked of the Theory of Colours, and among other things about drinking glasses, the dull figures on which appear yellow against the light, and blue against the dark, and therefore allow the observation of a primitive phenomenon.

“The highest which man can attain in these matters,” said Goethe, on this occasion, “is astonishment; if the primary phenomenon causes this, let him be satisfied; more it cannot bring; and he should forbear to seek for anything further behind it: here is the limit. But the sight of a primitive phenomenon is generally not enough for people; they think they must go still further; and are thus like children who, after peeping into a mirror, turn it round directly to see what is on the other side.”

The conversation turned upon Merck, and I asked whether he had ever meddled with natural science.

“Yes,” said Goethe, “he had even fine collections. Merck was altogether an extremely many-sided man. He loved art also; and if he saw a good work in the hands of a Philistine, of whom he thought that he did not know how to value it, he used every means to get it for his own collection. In such matters, he had no conscience; he considered all means fair, and did not despise even a sort of sublime fraud, if he could not attain his object otherwise.”

Goethe related some interesting examples of this peculiarity.

“A man like Merck,” continued he, “will not again be born, and if he were, the world would model him into a very different person. That was a good time

when Merck and I were young ! German literature was yet a clean tablet, on which one hoped to paint good things with pleasure. Now, it is so scribbled over and soiled, that there is no pleasure in looking at it, and a wise man does not know whereabouts he can inscribe anything."

Thursday, February 19, 1829.

Dined with Goethe *tête-à-tête* in his work-room. He was very cheerful, and told me that much which was good had lately befallen him, and that an affair with Artaria and the court had come to a happy termination.

We then talked a great deal about "Egmont," which had been represented, according to Schiller's version, on the preceding evening, and the injury done to the piece by this version was brought under discussion.

"For many reasons," said I, "the Regent should not have been omitted ; on the contrary, she is thoroughly necessary to the piece. Not only does this princess impart to the whole a higher, nobler character, but the political relations especially of the Spanish court are brought much more clearly to view by her conversation with Machiavelli."

"Unquestionably," said Goethe. "And then Egmont gains in dignity from the lustre which the partiality of this princess casts upon him, while Clara also seems exalted when we see that, vanquishing even princesses, she alone has all Egmont's love. These are very delicate effects, which cannot be obliterated without compromising the whole."

"It seems to me, too," said I, "that where there are so many important male parts, a single female per-

sonage like Clara appears too weak and somewhat overpowered. By means of the Regent the picture is better balanced. It is not enough that the Regent is talked of; her personal entrance makes the impression."

"You judge rightly," said Goethe. "When I wrote the piece I well weighed everything, as you may imagine; and hence it is no wonder that the whole materially suffers, when a principal figure is torn out of it, which has been conceived for the sake of the whole, and through which the whole exists. But Schiller had something violent in his nature; he often acted too much according to a preconceived idea, without sufficient regard to the subject which he had to treat."

"You may be blamed also," said I, "for allowing the alteration, and granting him such unlimited liberty in so important a matter."

"We often act more from indifference than kindness," replied Goethe. "Then, at that time, I was deeply occupied with other things. I had no interest for Egmont or for the stage, so I let Schiller have his own way. Now it is, at any rate, a consolation for me that the work exists in print, and that there are theatres where people are wise enough to perform it, as it is written, without abbreviation."

Goethe then asked me about the Theory of Colours, and whether I had thought any more of his proposal to write a compendium. I told him how the matter stood, and we fell unadvisedly into a difference of opinion, which I will describe, on account of the importance of the subject.

Whoever has made the observation, will recollect that on a clear winter's day, and in the sunlight, the shadows cast upon the snow frequently appear blue. This is classed by Goethe, in his Theory of Colours, under the subjective phenomena, for he assumes as a principle that the sunlight comes down to us—who do not live on high mountain-tops—not perfectly white, but, penetrating through an atmosphere more or less misty, has a yellowish lustre ; so that the snow, when the sun shines upon it, is not perfectly white, but is a surface tinged with yellow, which charms the eye to opposition, and therefore to the production of the blue colour. The blue shadow seen upon the snow is, according to this view, a *demanded colour*,* under which rubric Goethe places the phenomenon, and then very consistently explains the observations made by Saussure on Mount Blanc.

When of late I again looked over the first chapters of the Theory of Colours, to try whether I could act upon Goethe's friendly proposal, and write a Compendium of the Theory, I was enabled by the snow and sunshine to observe more closely the phenomenon of the blue shadow, and found to my astonishment that Goethe's inference was founded on error. How I came by this discovery I will explain.

The windows of my apartment look due south upon a garden, bounded by a building, which, from the lower altitude of the sun in winter, casts towards me a shadow long enough to cover half the garden.

I looked upon this broad shadow on the snow some

* "Geforderte Farbe," that is to say, a colour called forth by the eye itself, according to Goethe's peculiar theory, as explained above.—*Trans.*

days ago, while the sky was quite blue and the sun was bright, and was astonished to see the whole surface perfectly blue. "This," said I to myself, "cannot be a 'demanded colour,' for my eye is not brought into contact with any surface of snow illumined by the sun, so that the required contrast could be produced. On the contrary, I see nothing but the expanse of blue shadow." However, to be quite certain, and to prevent the dazzling light of the neighbouring houses from affecting my eye, I rolled up a sheet of paper, and looked through it on the shaded surface, when I found that the blue remained unaltered.

That this blue shadow could be nothing subjective was now established in my mind beyond a doubt. There stood the colour, without me, independent—my subject had no influence upon it. But what was it? And as it was certainly there, how was it produced?

I looked once more, and, behold, the riddle was solved for me! "What can it be," said I to myself, "but the reflection of the blue sky, which is brought down by the shade, and has an inclination to settle there? For it is written—Colour is akin to shade, readily combines with it, and readily appears to us in it and by it, as soon as an occasion is presented."

The following days gave me an opportunity to confirm my hypothesis. I walked about the fields; there was no blue sky, the sun shone through foggy mists, and spread a perfectly yellow light over the snow. It was strong enough to cast a decided shadow, and in this case, according to Goethe's doctrine, the brightest blue should have been produced. However, there was no blue; the shadows remained gray.

On the following forenoon, when the atmosphere was cloudy, the sun peeped out from time to time, and cast decided shadows upon the snow. Again, they were not blue, but gray. In both cases the reflection of the blue sky was wanting to give the shadow its colour.

I was thus sufficiently convinced that Goethe's deduction of this natural phenomenon was proved to be fallacious, and that the paragraphs in the "Theory of Colours" which treated of this subject were much in need of modification.

Something similar occurred to me with the coloured double shadows, which are seen to peculiar advantage by taperlight at break of day, or at the beginning of evening twilight, as well as by a clear moonlight. That one of the shadows, namely the yellow one, shone upon by the taperlight is of an objective kind, and belongs to the doctrine of dense media, Goethe has not expressly said, although such is the case; the other one, the bluish or bluish-green shadow, shone upon by the purest day or moon light, he declares to be subjective—a "demanded colour," produced in the eye by the yellow light of the taper diffused over the white paper.

Now, on a careful observation of the phenomenon, I did not find this doctrine thoroughly confirmed. On the contrary, it appeared to me that the weak day or moon light, acting from without, already brought with it a bluish tone, which is strengthened partly by the shadow, partly by the "demanding" (*fordernd*) yellow light of the taper, and that therefore we have an objective foundation here also.

That the dawning day and the moon cast a pale light is well known. A countenance seen at break of day, or by moonlight, appears pale, as is sufficiently proved by experiment. Shakspeare seems to have been aware of this fact, for in that remarkable passage, where Romeo leaves his beloved at daybreak, and he and Juliet suddenly appear so pale to each other, the observation of it must assuredly have served as a foundation. The operation of this light in producing paleness would of itself be a sufficient indication that it must bring with it a greenish or bluish tinge, since it has precisely the same effect as a mirror of bluish or greenish glass. The following may serve as a further confirmation :—

Light, as seen by the mind's eye, may be conceived as completely white ; but the empirical light, as perceived by the corporeal eye, is seldom seen in such purity. On the contrary, it has a tendency to take either the *plus* or the *minus* side, and to appear with either a yellowish or a bluish tone. In this case, the immediate sunlight, as well as the taperlight, inclines decidedly to the *plus* side—the yellowish ; but the light of the moon, as well as that of dawn and evening twilight, neither of which are direct, but only reflected, and are further modified by twilight and night, incline to the passive—the *minus* side, and have a bluish tone to the eye.

Let any one place a sheet of white paper in the twilight or moonlight, so that one-half of it may be shone upon by the day or moon light, and the other by the taperlight, then one-half will have a bluish, the other a yellowish tone ; and both lights, without any addi-

tion of shade, or any subjective heightening, will have already ranged themselves on the active or the passive side.

The result of my observations, therefore, was, that even Goethe's doctrine of the coloured double shadow was not thoroughly correct; that in the production of this phenomenon there was more of the objective than he had observed, and that the law of subjective "demand" (*Forderung*) could be looked upon as merely secondary.

Indeed, generally, if the human eye were so sensitive and susceptible, that at the slightest contact of one colour it had an immediate tendency to produce the opposite, it would be constantly transferring one colour into another, so that the most unpleasant mixture would arise.

Fortunately, however, this is not the case; but, on the contrary, a healthy eye is so organized that it either does not observe the "demanded" colours, or if its attention is directed towards them, produces them with difficulty; indeed this operation requires some practice and dexterity before it can succeed even under favourable circumstances.

What is really characteristic in such subjective phenomena, viz., that the eye to a certain extent requires a strong incitement to produce them, and that when they are produced they have no permanence, but are transient and quickly fading, has been too little regarded by Goethe, both in the case of the blue shadow in the snow, and in that of the coloured double-shadow, for in both cases the surface in question has a scarcely perceptible tinge, and in both cases the "demanded"

colour appears decidedly marked at the very first glance.

But Goethe, with his adherence to a law he had once recognised, and with his maxim of applying it even in such cases where it seems concealed, could easily be tempted to extend a synthesis too far, and to discern a favourite law even in cases where a totally different influence is at work.

When to-day he spoke of his Theory of Colours, and asked how the proposed compendium was going on, I would willingly have passed over my new discoveries in silence, for I felt in some perplexity as to how I should tell him the truth without offending him.

Nevertheless, as I was really in earnest with respect to the compendium, it was necessary to remove all errors, and to rectify all misunderstandings, before I could make a sure progress in the task.

All that I could do was to make the frank confession to him that, after careful observation, I found myself compelled to differ from him in some points, inasmuch as I found that neither his deduction of the blue shadow in the snow, nor his doctrine of the coloured double-shadow, was completely confirmed.

I communicated to him my thoughts and observations ; but as I have not the gift of describing objects fully and clearly by word of mouth, I confined myself to a statement of the results of my observation, without going into a more minute explanation of details, intending to do this in writing.

However, I had scarcely opened my mouth, when Goethe's sublimely-serene countenance became clouded over, and I saw but too clearly that he did not approve of my objections.

“ Truly,” said I, “ he who would get the better of your Excellency must rise early in the morning ; but yet it is possible that the wise may go too far, and the foolish find the spoil.”

“ As if, forsooth, you had found it,” returned Goethe, with an ironical laugh ; “ with your idea of coloured light you belong to the fourteenth century, and with all the rest you are in the very abyss of dialectics. The only thing good about you is that you are, at any rate, honest enough to speak out plainly what you think.

“ My Theory of Colours,” he continued, “ fares just the same as the Christian religion. One fancies, for a while, that one has faithful disciples ; but, before one is aware, they fall off and form a new sect. You are a heretic like the rest, for you are not the first that has apostatized. I have fallen out with the most excellent men about contested points in the Theory of Colours, viz., with —— about ——, and with —— about ——.” Here he mentioned some names of eminence.

We had now finished eating, conversation came to a stand-still, and Goethe rose and placed himself against the window. I went up to him and pressed his hand, for I loved him in spite of his taunts, and I felt, moreover, that I was right, and that he was the suffering party.

Before long, we were again talking and joking about indifferent subjects ; but when I went to him, and told him that he should have my objections in writing for a closer examination, and that the only reason he did not agree with me lay in the clumsiness of my verbal

statement, he could not help, half-laughing and half-sneering, to throw in my teeth something about heretics and heresy at the very doorway.

If it should appear strange that Goethe could not readily bear contradiction with respect to his Theory of Colours, while with respect to his poetical works he always showed himself perfectly easy, and heard every well-founded objection with thanks, we may perhaps solve the riddle by reflecting that, as a poet, he received the most perfect satisfaction from without, while, by the Theory of Colours, the greatest and most difficult of his works, he had gained nothing but censure and disapproval. During half a life he had been annoyed by the most senseless opposition on every side, and it was natural enough that he should always find himself in a sort of irritable polemic position, and be always fully armed for a passionate conflict.

His feeling for the Theory of Colours was like that of a mother who loves an excellent child all the more the less it is esteemed by others.

“As for what I have done as a poet,” he would repeatedly say to me, “I take no pride in it whatever. Excellent poets have lived at the same time with myself, poets more excellent have lived before me, and others will come after me. But that in my century I am the only person who knows the truth in the difficult science of colours—of that, I say, I am not a little proud, and here I have a consciousness of a superiority to many.”

Friday, February 20, 1829.

Dined with Goethe. He is pleased at having finished

the "Wanderjahre," which he will send off to-morrow. In the Theory of Colours he is coming over a little to my opinion concerning the blue shadow in the snow. He talked of his "Italian journey," which he had again taken under consideration.*

* * * * *

He then talked about the fourth volume of his Life, and the method in which he would treat it ; saying that my notes on the year 1824, concerning what he had already executed and planned, would be highly useful to him.

He read Götting's journal aloud, which treats of the former fencing-masters at Jena in a very kindly spirit. Goethe speaks very well of Götting.

Monday, March 23, 1829.

"I have found a paper of mine among some others," said Goethe to-day, "in which I call architecture 'petrified music.' Really there is something in this ; the tone of mind produced by architecture approaches the effect of music.

"Splendid edifices and apartments are for princes and kingdoms. Those who live in them feel at ease and contented, and desire nothing further.

"To my own nature this is quite repugnant. In a splendid abode, like that which I had at Carlsbad, I am at once lazy and inactive. On the contrary, a small residence, like this poor apartment in which we now are, and where a sort of disorderly order—a sort of gipsy-fashion—prevails, suits me exactly. It allows my

* There is no occasion to explain the slight omission here.—*Trans.*

inner nature full liberty to act, and to create from itself alone."

We talked of Schiller's letters, the life which he and Goethe had led together, and how the two had daily incited each other to activity.

"Even in 'Faust,'" said I, "Schiller seems to have taken great interest; it is pleasant to see how he urges you, or allows himself to be misled by his idea of continuing 'Faust' himself. I perceive by this that there was something precipitate in his nature."

"You are right," said Goethe, "he was like all men who proceed too much from the idea. Then he was never in repose, and could never have done; as you may see by his letters on 'Wilhelm Meister,' which he would have now this way, and now that way. I had enough to do to stand my ground, and keep his works and mine free from such influences."

"I have," said I, "been reading this morning his 'Indian Death Dirge,' and have been delighted with its excellence."

"You see," said Goethe, "what a great artist Schiller was, and how he could manage even the objective, when brought traditionally before his eyes. That 'Indian Death Song' is certainly one of his very best poems, and I only wish he had made a dozen like it. And yet—can you believe it!—his nearest friends found fault with this poem, thinking it was not sufficiently tinctured with his ideality. Yes, my good fellow, such things one has to suffer from one's friends. Humboldt* found fault with my Dorothea, because, when assailed by the soldiers, she took up arms and

* Wilhelm von Humboldt.—*Trans.*

fought. And yet, without that trait, the character of the extraordinary girl, so adapted to the time and circumstances, is at once destroyed, and she sinks into commonplace. But the longer you live, the more you will see how few men are capable of appreciating what *must* be, and that, on the contrary, they only praise, and would only have that which is suitable to themselves. These of whom I spoke were the first and best; so you may judge what was the opinion of the multitude, and how, in fact, I always stood alone.

“Had I not had some solid foundation in the plastic arts and natural science, I should scarce have kept myself up in that evil time, and its daily influences; but this was my protection, and enabled me to aid Schiller also.”

Tuesday, March 24, 1829.

“The higher a man is,” said Goethe, “the more he is under the influence of demons, and he must take heed lest his guiding will counsel him to a wrong path.

“There was altogether something demoniac in my acquaintance with Schiller; we might have been brought together earlier or later; but that we met just at the time when I had finished my Italian journey, and Schiller began to be weary of philosophical speculation,—this, I say, led to very important consequences for us both.”

Thursday, April 2, 1829.

“I will discover to you,” said Goethe, to-day at dinner, “a political secret, which will sooner or later be made public. Capo d’Istria cannot long continue to be

at the head of Grecian affairs, for he wants one quality indispensable for such a position; *he is no soldier*. There is no instance of a mere cabinet statesman being able to organize a revolutionary state, and bring the military and their leaders under his control. With the sabre in his hand, at the head of an army, a man may command and give laws, secure of being obeyed; but without this the attempt is hazardous. Napoleon, if he had not been a soldier, could never have attained the highest power; and Capo d'Istria will not long keep the first place, but will very soon play a secondary part. I tell you this beforehand, and you will see it come. It lies in the nature of things, and must happen."

Goethe then talked much about the French, especially Cousin, Villemain, and Guizot.

"These men," said he, "look into, through, and round* a subject, with great success. They combine perfect knowledge of the past with the spirit of the nineteenth century; and the result is wonderful."

We then came to the newest French poets, and the meaning of the terms "classic" and "romantic."

"A new expression occurs to me," said Goethe, "which does not ill define the state of the case. I call the classic *healthy*, the romantic *sickly*. In this sense, the 'Nibelungenlied' is as classic as the 'Iliad,' for both are vigorous and healthy. Most modern productions are romantic, not because they are new, but because they are weak, morbid, and sickly; and the antique is classic, not because it is old, but

* This felicitous rendering of "Einsicht, Umsicht, and Durchsicht," is by Mrs. Fuller.—*Trans.*

because it is strong, fresh, joyous, and healthy. If we distinguish 'classic' and 'romantic' by these qualities, it will be easy to see our way clearly."

The conversation turned upon the imprisonment of Beranger—

"He is rightly served," said Goethe. "His late poems are really contrary to all order; and he has fully deserved punishment by his offences against king, state, and peaceful citizenship. His early poems, on the contrary, are cheerful and harmless, and are well adapted to make a circle of gay and happy people, which, indeed, is the best that can be said of songs."

"I am sure," said I, "that he has been injured by the society in which he lives, and that, to please his revolutionary friends, he has said many things which he otherwise would not have said. Your excellency should fulfil your intention of writing a chapter on influences; the subject is the richer and more important, the more one thinks of it."

"It is only too rich," said Goethe; "for in truth all is influence except ourselves."

"We have only to see," said I, "whether an influence is injurious or beneficial—whether it is suitable or repugnant to our nature."

"That is indeed the point," said Goethe, "but the difficulty is for our better nature to maintain itself vigorously, and not to allow the demons more power than is due."

At dessert, Goethe had a laurel, in full flower, and a Japanese plant, placed before us on the table. I remarked what different feelings were excited by the two plants; that the sight of the laurel produced a

cheerful, light, mild, and tranquil mood, but that of the Japanese plant, one of barbaric melancholy.

“ You are not wrong,” said Goethe ; “ and hence great influence over the inhabitants of a country has been conceded to its vegetation. And, surely, he who passes his life surrounded by solemn, lofty oaks, must be a different man from him who lives among airy birches. Still we must remember that men, in general, have not such sensitive natures as we, but vigorously pursue their own course of life without allowing so much power to external impressions. Nevertheless, this much is certain,—that not only the inborn peculiarities of a race, but soil and climate, aliment and occupation, combine to form the character of a people. It is also to be borne in mind, that the primitive races mostly took possession of a soil that pleased them ; and, consequently, where the country was already in harmony with their own inborn character.”

“ Just look round,” continued Goethe ; “ behind you, on the desk, there is a paper which I wish you to look at.”

“ This blue envelope ? ” said I.

“ Yes,” said he. “ Now, what do you say to the handwriting ? Is it not that of a man who felt himself noble and free, as he wrote the address ? Whose do you think it is ? ”

I looked at the paper with partiality. The hand was indeed free and imposing. “ Merck might have written so,” said I.

“ No,” said Goethe ; “ he was not sufficiently noble and positive. It is from Zelter. Pen and paper were favourable to him in the case of this envelope ; so

that the writing perfectly expresses his great character. I shall put the paper into my collection of autographs."

Friday, April 3, 1829.

Dined with Coudray at Goethe's. Coudray gave an account of a staircase in the grand-ducal palace at Belvidere, which had been found inconvenient for many years,—which the old master had always despaired of improving,—and which had now been completely rectified under the reign of the young prince.

Coudray also gave an account of the progress of several highways, saying that the road over the mountains had to be taken round a little, on account of a rise of two feet to the rood (Ruthe), while in some places there were eighteen inches to the rood.

I asked Coudray how many inches constituted the proper standard for road-making in hilly districts. "Ten inches to the rood," said he, "is a convenient measure." "But," said I, "when we go from Weimar along any road—east, south, west, or north—we find some places where the highway has a rise of far more than ten inches to the rood." "Those are short unimportant distances," replied Coudray; "and in road-making we often pass over such spots in the vicinity of a place, that we may not deprive it of its little income from relays." We laughed at this honest fraud. "And in fact," continued Coudray, "it is a mere trifle; the carriages get easily over the ground, and the passengers are for once and a way inured to a little hardship. Besides, as the relays are usually put on at inns, the drivers have an opportunity of taking

something to drink, and they would not thank any one for spoiling their sport."

"I should like to know," said Goethe, "whether in perfectly flat countries it would not be better to interrupt the straight line of road, so as to allow it to rise and fall a little. This would not prevent comfortable travelling; and there would be this advantage, that the road would be always kept dry by the draining."

"That might be done," replied Coudray, "and would probably be very useful."

Coudray then produced a paper,—the scheme of instructions for a young architect whom the Upper-Building Board (Ober-Baubehörde) was about to send to Paris to complete his education. He read the instructions, of which Goethe approved. Goethe had obtained the necessary assistance from the minister, we were pleased at the success of the affair, and talked of the precautionary measures to be adopted in order that the money might be really of use to the young man, and last him for a year. The intention was, on his return, to place him as a teacher at the industrial school which was to be established, by which means the clever young man would at once have a suitable sphere of action. All was well devised, and I gave my silent good wishes.

Plans and studies for carpenters, drawn by Schindel, were then produced and looked over. Coudray considered them of importance, and perfectly fitted for the use of the industrial school.

There was then some talk about buildings, the means of avoiding echo, and the great firmness of the

edifices belonging to the Jesuits. "At Messina," said Goethe, "all the buildings were thrown down by an earthquake except the church and convent of the Jesuits, which stood unharmed, as if they had been built the day before. There was not a trace that the earthquake had had the slightest effect upon them."

From the Jesuits and their wealth, conversation turned upon the Catholics and Irish emancipation. "Emancipation will, we see, be granted," said Cou-dray, "but with so many clauses on the part of Parliament, that it cannot in any way be dangerous to England."

"All preventive measures," said Goethe, "are ineffectual with Catholics. The Papal see has interests and means to carry them out quietly, of which we never dream. If I were a member of Parliament, I would not hinder emancipation; but I would have it recorded, that when the first distinguished Protestant head fell by a Catholic vote, people might think of me."

Conversation then turned on the newest French literature, and Goethe spoke again with admiration of the lectures of MM. Cousin, Villemain, and Guizot.

"Instead of the superficial lightness of Voltaire," said he, "they have an erudition, such as, in earlier days, was unknown out of Germany. And such intellect! such searching and pressing out of the subject! superb! It is as if they trod the wine-press. All three are excellent, but I would give the preference to Guizot; he is my favourite."

Speaking on topics of universal history, Goethe spoke thus on the subject of rulers:—

“To be popular, a great ruler needs no other means than his greatness. If he has striven and succeeded in making his realm happy at home and honoured abroad, it matters not whether he ride about in a state coach, dressed in all his orders, or in a bear-skin, with his cigar in his mouth, in a miserable *drosky*, he is sure of love and esteem from his people.

“But if a prince lacks personal greatness, and does not know how to conciliate his subjects by good deeds, he must think of other means, and there is none better and more effective than religion, and a sympathy with the customs of his people. To appear at church every Sunday; to look down upon, and let himself be looked at for an hour by the congregation, is the best means of becoming popular which can be recommended to a young sovereign, and one which, with all his greatness, Napoleon himself did not disdain.”

Conversation again turned upon the Catholics, and it was remarked how great were the silent operation and influence of the ecclesiastics. An anecdote was related of a young writer of Henault, who had made somewhat merry with the rosary in a periodical which he edited. The paper was immediately bought up through the influence of the priests over their several congregations.

“An Italian translation of my ‘Werther,’” said Goethe, “very soon appeared at Milan. Not a single copy of it was to be seen a short time afterwards. The bishop had caused the whole edition to be bought up by the clergy in the various districts. I was not vexed, but pleased with the shrewd gentlemen, who saw, at once, that ‘Werther’ was a bad book for the

Catholics, and I could not do otherwise than commend him for taking immediately the most effective measures quietly to suppress it."

Sunday, April 5, 1829.

Goethe said he had driven out to Belvidere this morning, to look at Coudray's new staircase in the castle, which he found excellent. He also told me that a great petrified log had been sent him, which he would show me.

"Such petrified trunks," said he, "are found about the fifty-first degree round about the earth, as far as America, like a girdle. We must always go on wondering. We have no idea whatever of the early organization of the earth, and I cannot blame Herr von Buch for trying to *indoctrinate* mankind for the sake of spreading his hypothesis. He knows nothing, but nobody knows more; and, after all, it does not matter what is taught, if it has only some show of reason."

Goethe told me that Zelter desired to be remembered to me, at which I was greatly pleased. We then talked of his "Travels in Italy;" and he told me that in one of his letters from that country he had found a song, which he would show me. He asked me to hand him a packet of papers which lay before me on the desk. I gave it him: it contained his letters from Italy; he looked out the poem, and read:—

"Cupido, loser, eigensinniger Knabe."

"Cupid, thou wanton, thou self-will'd boy," &c.*

* The poem in its complete form will be found in the letters relating to the "Second Stay at Rome" (Zweyter Römischer Aufenthalt), under the head of "January 1788."—*Trans.*

I was highly pleased with this poem, which seemed to me perfectly new.

“It cannot be strange to you,” said Goethe, “for it is in ‘Claudine von Villa Bella,’ where it is sung by Rugantino. I have, however, given it there in such a fragmentary state, that one passes it over without observing what it means. I think, however, it stands well. It prettily expresses the situation, and is in the anacreontic vein. This song, and others of the kind from my operas, should properly be reprinted among my ‘Poems,’ that the composer may have them all together.” I thought this a good notion, and took it as a hint for the future.

Goethe had read the poem very beautifully. I could not get it out of my head, and it seemed to have made a lasting impression upon him also. The last lines—

“So rude thy sport, I fear my poor little soul will
Haste away to escape thee, and flee her dwelling,”

he uttered from time to time, as if in a dream.

He then told me of a book about Napoleon, lately published, which was written by one who had known the hero in his youth, and contained the most remarkable disclosures. “The book is very tame,” said he, “written without any enthusiasm; but one sees what a grand character there is in the truth when one ventures to speak it.”

Goethe also told me about a tragedy by a young poet. “It is a pathological work,” said he; “a superfluity of sap is bestowed on some parts which do not require it, and drawn out of those which stand in need of it. The subject was good, but the scenes which I ex-

pected were not there ; while others, which I did not expect, were elaborated with assiduity and love. This is what I call pathological, or even ‘romantic,’ if you would rather speak after our new theory.”

We remained together a little longer very cheerfully, and at last Goethe gave me some honey and also some dates, which I took with me.

Monday, April 6, 1829.

Goethe gave me a letter from Egon Ebert, which I read at dinner, and which highly pleased me. We said a great deal in praise of Egon Ebert and Bohemia, and also mentioned Professor Zauper with affection.

“Bohemia is a peculiar country,” said Goethe. “I have always liked to be there. In the culture of the *literati* there is still something pure, which begins to be rare in the north of Germany ; since here every vagabond writes, with whom moral basis or higher views are not to be thought of.”

Goethe then spoke of Ebert’s newest epic poem, of the early female government in Bohemia, and of the origin of the tradition of the Amazons. This brought conversation to the epic of another poet, who had taken great pains to get favourable notices of his work in the public prints.

“Such notices,” said Goethe, “have appeared in various papers. But at last comes the ‘Halle Literary Gazette,’ telling plainly what the poem is really worth, and thus all the compliments of the other papers are nullified. He who nowadays will not have the truth, is discovered ; the time is past for deluding and misleading the public.”

"I wonder," said I, "that man can toil so for a little fame, and even stoop to falsities."

"My good fellow," said Goethe, "a name is no despicable matter. Napoleon, for the sake of a great name, broke in pieces almost half a world."

A short pause arose, after which Goethe told me more of the new book about Napoleon, adding—

"The power of truth is great. Every halo, every illusion which journalists, historians, and poets have conjured up about Napoleon, vanishes before the terrible reality of this book; but the hero becomes no less than before; on the contrary, he grows in stature as he increases in truth."

"His personal influence," said I, "must have had a peculiar magic, that men should so attach themselves to him at once, adhere to him, and suffer themselves to be wholly governed by him."

"Certainly," said Goethe, "his personal influence was immense. Yet the chief reason was, that men under him were sure of attaining their object. On this account they were drawn towards him, as they are to every one who gives them a like certainty. Thus actors attach themselves to a new manager, of whom they think that he will assign them good parts. This is an old story constantly repeated; so is human nature constituted. No man serves another disinterestedly, but he does it willingly if he knows he can thus serve himself. Napoleon knew men well; he knew how to make proper use of their weaknesses."

The conversation turned upon Zelter.

"You know," said Goethe, "that Zelter received the Prussian Order. But he had no coat of arms,

while, from his large family, he might hope for a long continuance of his name. A coat of arms was therefore necessary as an honourable basis, and I have taken the fancy to make him one. I wrote to him, and he was pleased, but insisted on having a horse. ‘Good,’ said I, ‘a horse you shall have, but it shall be one with wings.’ But turn your head; a paper lies behind you, upon which I have made the sketch with pencil.”

I took up the paper, and examined the drawing. The arms looked very stately, and I could not but praise the invention. In the lower field were the battlements of a city wall, intimating that Zelter had been, in early days, a skilful mason. A winged horse rose from behind, indicating his genius and high aspirations. Above the escutcheon was a lyre, over which shone a star, as a symbol of the art by which our excellent friend, under the influence and protection of favouring stars, had won his fame. Beneath was annexed the Order which his king, in recognition of his great merits, had bestowed upon him.

“I have had it engraved by Facius,” said Goethe, “and you shall see an impression. Is it not pleasant for one friend to make a coat of arms for another, and thus, as it were, bestow nobility upon him?”

We sat a while longer at table, taking some glasses of old Rhenish wine, with some good biscuits. Goethe hummed to himself unintelligibly. The poem of yesterday came into my head again. I recited the lines,—

“My goods and chattels hast thou knock’d about sadly;
I seek, and only seem to wander in blindness.”

"I cannot get that poem out of my head," said I. "It is quite unique, and most admirably expresses the disorder which love occasions in our life."

"It brings a gloomy condition before our eyes," said Goethe.

"On me," said I, "it makes the impression of a Dutch picture."

"There is something in it of the 'Good man and good wife,'" said Goethe.

"You have just anticipated me," said I; "for I have been forced to keep on thinking of that Scottish subject, and Ostade's picture was before my eyes."

"Yet, strange to say," observed Goethe, "neither of these two poems could be painted; they convey the impression of a picture—they produce a similar mood; but, once painted, they would be nothing."

"It is," said I, "a fine instance of poetry verging as nearly on painting as possible, without going out of its own sphere. Such poems are my favourites, as they inspire both contemplation and feeling. But I hardly understand how you could obtain the feeling of such a situation; the poem is as if from another time and another world."

"I shall not write such another," said Goethe; "and know not how it came to me, as is often the case."

"One peculiarity of this poem," said I, "is, that it has upon me the effect of rhyme, and yet it is not in rhyme. How is this?"

"That is the result of the rhythm," he replied. "The lines begin with a short syllable, and then proceed in trochees till the dactyle near the close,

which has a peculiar effect, and gives a sad, bewailing character to the poem."

He took a pencil, and divided the line,—

"Võn | mēinēm | brēitēn | Lāgēr | bīn ŷch vēr | triebēn."

We then talked of rhythm in general, and came to the conclusion that no certain rules can be laid down for such matters.

"The measure," said Goethe, "flows, as it were, unconsciously from the mood of the poet. If he thought about it while writing the poem he would go mad, and produce nothing of value."

I was waiting for the impression of the seal. Goethe began to speak of Guizot.

"I am going on with his lectures, which continue to be excellent. Those of the present year go about as far as the eighth century. I know no historian more profound or more penetrating. Things of which no one thinks have the greatest significance in his eyes, as sources of important events. For instance, what influence certain religious opinions have had upon history; how the doctrine of original sin, grace, and good works, has given this or that form to certain epochs, is shown and deduced with the utmost clearness. Then the enduring life of Roman law, which, like a diving duck, hides itself from time to time, but is never quite lost, always coming up again alive, is well set forth; on which occasion full acknowledgment is given to our excellent Savigny.

"When Guizot speaks of the influence which other nations exercised on the Gauls in former times, I was particularly struck with what he says of the Germans.

“ ‘The Germans,’ says he, ‘brought us the idea of personal freedom, which was possessed by that nation more than any other.’

“ Is not that good ? Is he not perfectly right ? and does not this idea work upon us even to the present day ? The Reformation is as much attributable to this source, as the *Burschen* conspiracy on the Wartburg—wise as well as foolish enterprises. Even the motley character of our literature ; the thirst of our poets for originality—the belief of each one that he must strike out a new path ; the separation and isolation among our learned men, each one standing by himself, and working from a point of his own,—all comes from this source.

“ The French and English, on the other hand, keep far more together, and guide themselves one by another. They harmonize in dress and manners. They fear to differ from one another, lest they should be remarkable, or even ridiculous. But with the Germans each one goes his own way, and strives to satisfy himself ; he does not ask about others, for, as Guizot rightly observes, he has within him the idea of personal freedom, from which, as I have said, comes much that is excellent, but also much absurdity.”

Tuesday, April 7, 1829.

As I entered, I found Hofrath Meyer, who had been ill of late, sitting with Goethe at table, and was rejoiced to see him so much better. They spoke of things relating to art,—of Peel, who has given four thousand pounds for a Claude Lorraine, and has thus found especial favour in the eyes of Meyer.

The newspapers were brought in, and we looked over them while waiting for the soup. The emancipation of the Irish was now discussed as the order of the day.

“It is instructive,” said Goethe, “to see how things come to light on this occasion, of which no one ever thought, and which would never have been spoken of but for the present crisis. We cannot, however, get a clear notion of the state of Ireland; the subject is too intricate. But this we can see, that she suffers from evils which will not be removed by any means, and therefore, of course, not by emancipation. If it has hitherto been unfortunate for Ireland to endure her evils alone, it is now unfortunate that England is also drawn into them. Then, no confidence can be put in the Catholics. We see with what difficulty the two million of Protestants in Ireland have kept their ground hitherto against the preponderating five million of Catholics; and how, for instance, the poor Protestant farmers have been oppressed, tricked, and tormented, when among Catholic neighbours. The Catholics do not agree among themselves, but they always unite against a Protestant. They are like a pack of hounds, who bite one another, but, when a stag comes in view, they all unite immediately to run it down.”

From Ireland conversation turned to the affairs of Turkey. Surprise was expressed that the Russians, with their preponderating power, did not effect more in the late campaign.

“The fact of the matter is this,” said Goethe, “the means were inadequate, and therefore overgreat requisitions were made upon individuals; this produced

great personal deeds and sacrifices, without advancing the cause on the whole."

"It may be," said Meyer, "a bad locality. We see, in the earliest times, that, at this very spot, if an enemy attempted to penetrate anywhere from the Danube to the northern mountains, he always encountered the most obstinate resistance, and almost invariably failed. If the Russians could only keep the sea-side open, to furnish themselves with stores in that way!"

"That is yet to be hoped," said Goethe; "I am now reading Napoleon's campaign in Egypt,—namely, what is related by the hero's every-day companion, Bourrienne, which destroys the romantic cast of many scenes, and displays facts in their naked sublime truth. It is evident that he undertook this expedition merely to fill up an epoch when he could do nothing in France to make himself ruler. He was at first undecided what to do; he visited all the French harbours on the Atlantic coast, to inspect the fleets, and see whether an expedition against England were practicable or not. He found it was not, and then decided on going to Egypt."

"It raises my admiration," said I, "that Napoleon, at that early age, could play with the great affairs of the world as easily and securely as if many years' practice and experience had gone before."

"That, my dear friend," said Goethe, "is an inborn quality with great talents. Napoleon managed the world as Hummel his piano; both achievements appear wonderful, we do not understand one more than the other, yet so it is, and the whole is done before our eyes.

Napoleon was in this especially great—that he was at all hours the same. Before a battle, during a battle, after a victory, after a defeat, he stood always firm, was always clear and decided as to what he should do. He was always in his element, and equal to each situation and each moment, just as it is all alike to Hummel whether he plays an *adagio* or an *allegro*, bass or treble. This facility we find everywhere where there is real talent, in the arts of peace as well as in war; at the harpsichord as behind the cannon.

“We see, by this book,” continued Goethe, “how many fables have been invented about the Egyptian campaign. Much, indeed, is corroborated, but much is not, and most that has been said is contradicted. That he had eight hundred Turkish prisoners shot is true; but the act appears as the mature determination of a long council of war, on the conviction, after a consideration of all the circumstances, that there were no means of saving them. That he descended into the Pyramids is a fable. He stood at his ease on the outside, and let others tell him what they had seen below. In the same way, the tradition that he wore the Eastern dress is inaccurate. He put it on once at home, and appeared in it among his followers, to see how it became him. But the turban does not suit such long heads, and he never put on the dress again.

“He really visited those sick of the plague, and, indeed, in order to prove that the man who could vanquish fear could vanquish the plague also. And he was right! I can instance a fact from my own life, when I was inevitably exposed to infection from a putrid fever, and warded off the disease merely by force of

will. It is incredible what power the moral will has in such cases. It penetrates, as it were, the body, and puts it into a state of activity which repels all hurtful influences. Fear, on the other hand, is a state of indolent weakness and susceptibility, which makes it easy for every foe to take possession of us. This Napoleon knew well, and he felt that he risked nothing in giving his army an imposing example.

"But," continued he, gaily, "pay your respects. What book do you think Napoleon carried in his field library?—my 'Werther!'"

"We may see by his levee at Erfurt," said I, "that he had studied it well."

"He had studied it as a criminal judge does his documents," said Goethe, "and in this spirit talked with me about it. In Bourrienne's work there is a list of the books which Napoleon took to Egypt, among which is 'Werther.' But what is worth noticing in this list, is the manner in which the books are classed under different rubrics. Under the head *Politique*, for instance, we find the Old Testament, the New Testament, the Koran; by which we see from what point of view Napoleon regarded religious matters."

He told us many other interesting matters from the book. Among others, the incident was mentioned how Napoleon with his army went through part of the dry bed in the narrow part of the Red Sea, at the time of ebb; but was overtaken by the flood, and the last men waded up to their arms in water, so that the exploit nearly ended in Pharaoh's style. This led Goethe to say much that was new on the rise of the

flood. He compared it with that of the clouds, which do not come from a great distance, but arise at once in various parts, and pass along symmetrically everywhere.

Wednesday, April 8, 1829.

Goethe was already at table when I entered; he received me with a very cheerful air.

“From whence, think you,” said he, “have I received a letter?—From Rome. But from whom?—From the King of Bavaria.”

“I sympathize in the pleasure you feel,” said I. “And is it not odd? Not an hour since, and during my walk, I had occupied myself with thinking about the King of Bavaria; and now I receive this pleasant intelligence.”

“We have often internal intimations of that sort,” said Goethe. “There is the letter; take it, sit down by me, and read it.”

I took the letter, Goethe took the newspaper, and so I read undisturbed the royal words. The letter was dated Rome, 26th March 1829, and was written in a very legible and dignified hand. The King told Goethe that he had bought an estate in Rome, the Villa di Malta, with the adjacent gardens in the neighbourhood of the Villa Ludovisi, at the north-west end of the city. It stands upon a hill, so that he can see over all Rome, and has towards the north-east a full view of St. Peter's.

“It is a prospect,” he writes, “which one would travel a long way to enjoy, and which I have at my command every hour, from the windows of my own house.”

He goes on congratulating himself at being so pleasantly settled at Rome. "I had not seen Rome for twelve years," he writes, "and longed for it as one longs for a mistress; I shall return with my feelings tranquillized, as one comes to a beloved female friend." He then speaks of the sublime edifices and works of art with the enthusiasm of a connoisseur, whose heart is set on the really beautiful and its advancement, and who is keenly sensitive to any departure from good taste. The letter altogether was conceived and expressed in a beautiful and thoroughly humane feeling, such as one does not expect from persons of such high rank. I expressed my delight to Goethe.

"There you see a monarch," said he, "who, while he has his royal majesty, preserves the innate beauty of his nature as a man. This is a rare phenomenon, and therefore the more delightful."

I looked again at the letter, and found in it some more excellent passages. "Here in Rome," writes the King, "I refresh myself from the cares of a throne; Art and Nature are my daily enjoyments—artists my table companions." He also writes how he passed the house where Goethe resided, and how he thought of him at the time. Some passages are cited from the "Roman Elegies,"* from which it may be seen that the King keeps them fresh in his memory, and likes to read them at Rome, from time to time, on the very spot where they were produced.

"Yes," said Goethe, "he is particularly fond of those elegies. He has teased me a great deal to tell

* *i. e.* Goethe's.—*Trans.*

him how far they are matter of fact ; the effect of the poems being so pleasant, that it seems as if there must have been something in the reality. People seldom reflect that a poet can generally make something good out of small occasions.

“ I wish,” continued Goethe, “ that I had the King’s poems by me, that I might allude to them in my answer. I should think they were good, to judge from the little I have read. In form and treatment he has much of Schiller, and, if he has put the substance of a lofty soul into so fine a vase, we have a right to expect much excellence. I am glad that the King is so pleasantly settled at Rome. I know the villa—the situation is beautiful, and all the German artists reside in the vicinity.”

The servant changed the plates, and Goethe bade him spread out the large engraving of Rome on the floor of the “ covered chamber.” “ I will show you on what a beautiful spot the King has settled, that you may have a right notion of the locality.” I felt much obliged to Goethe.

“ Yesterday evening,” said I, “ I read ‘ Claudine von Villa Bella,’ and was much delighted with it. The foundation is so well laid, and it is carried out with so much joyous audacity, that I feel the strongest desire to see it on the stage.”

“ If it is well played,” said Goethe, “ the effect is not bad.”

“ I have already cast the piece in my mind,” said I, “ and distributed the parts. Herr Genast must be Rugantino ; he seems actually made for the part. Herr Franke must be Don Pedro, for he is similarly shaped,

and it is good for two brothers to be somewhat alike. Herr La Roche should be Basco, who, with his excellent art and making-up, would give the part the wild aspect it requires."

"Madame Eberwein," continued Goethe, "would make a very good Lucinde, and Mademoiselle Schmidt would be Claudine."

"For Alonzo," said I, "we ought to have a stately figure—rather a good actor than a singer, and I think Herr Oels or Herr Graff would be well placed. But by whom is the opera composed, and what is the music like?"

"By Reichardt, and it is excellent," answered Goethe; "only, the instrumentation is a little too weak, owing to the taste of the time. Something should now be done in this respect, so as to make the instrumentation a little stronger and fuller. With our song, '*Cupido loser, eigensinniger Knabe*,' the composer has been particularly happy."

"It is a peculiarity of this song," said I, "that it puts me in a pleasant dreamy mood whenever it is recited."

"From such a mood it proceeded," said Goethe, "and therefore this effect is the right one."

We had finished eating. Frederick came in and told us that he had laid out the engraving of Rome in the "covered chamber." We went in to look at it. The picture of the great metropolis of the world lay before us. Goethe soon found the Villa Ludovisi, and near it the King's new purchase—the Villa di Malta.

"See," said he, "what a superb situation! The whole city is spread out before you, and the hill is so

high, that you can see quite over the buildings towards south and east. I have been in this villa, and have often enjoyed the view from the windows. Here, where the city extends out in a point towards the north-east beyond the Tiber, lies St. Peter's; and here, hard by, is the Vatican. The King, you see, has from the windows of his villa a full view of these buildings across the river. The long road here, from the north into the city, comes from Germany; that is the Porta del Popolo. I lived in one of these first streets near the gate, in a corner house. They show another in Rome as the place where I lived; but it is not the right one. No matter; such things are, at bottom, quite indifferent, and we must let tradition take its course."

We returned into the dining-room.

"The Chancellor," said I, "would be pleased with that letter from the King."

"He shall see it," said Goethe.

"When I read in the Paris newspaper," continued Goethe, "the speeches and debates of the Chambers, I cannot help thinking of the Chancellor, and how truly he would be in his element there. For such a place it is not enough to have talent, but an impulse to speak, and a delight in it; both of which are united in our Chancellor. Napoleon, too, had this impulse to speak; and when he could not he was forced to write or dictate. We find with Blucher, too, that he liked to speak, and spoke well and with emphasis; he had cultivated this talent at the lodge. Our Grand Duke, too, liked to speak, though he was by nature laconic; and when he could not speak, he wrote. He has

prepared many laws, many treaties, for the most part well ; only princes have not time or quiet to obtain the necessary knowledge of details. Even in his last days he made an order about paying for the restoration of pictures. This was a happy instance, for, quite like a prince, he had made a mathematical calculation for paying the expenses of restoration by measure : if the restored picture holds twelve square feet, pay twelve dollars ; if four feet, four dollars. This was like a prince, but not like an artist ; for a twelve-foot picture may be in such a state that it can be cleaned without much trouble in a day, while a four-foot picture may be in such a condition that the industry and toil of a whole week will scarcely suffice to restore it. But princes, like good military men, are fond of mathematical arrangements, and go to work on the grand scale, according to measure."

I was pleased with this anecdote. We then said a great deal about Art, and kindred subjects.

" I possess drawings," said Goethe, " after pictures by Raffaelle and Domenichino, upon which Meyer made a remarkable observation, which I will communicate :—

" ' The drawings,' said Meyer, ' somewhat evince a want of practice ; but it is evident that whoever made them had a delicate and just feeling for the pictures which were before him, and this has passed into the drawing, so as to bring the originals faithfully before the mind. If an artist of our day copied those pictures, he would draw everything far better, and perhaps more correctly ; but I can venture to say, that he would want this true feeling for the original, and that,

therefore, his superior drawing would be far from giving us so pure and perfect a notion of Raffaello or Domenichino.'

"Is not that good?" said Goethe. "And the same may be said of translations. Voss, for instance, has certainly made an excellent translation from Homer; yet, I am inclined to think, a person might have had and conveyed a more *naïve* and faithful representation of the original, without being, on the whole, so masterly a translator as Voss."

I found this all very just, and perfectly agreed with it. As the weather was fine, and the sun was already high, we went a little way down the garden, where Goethe had some trees tied up, which hung too low upon the path.

The yellow crocuses were in full vigour. We looked upon the flowers and then upon the path, where we had perfectly violet images. "You were lately of opinion," said Goethe, "that green and red mutually called forth each other better than yellow and blue, inasmuch as the former colours stood at a higher degree, and were therefore more perfect, fuller,* and more effective than the latter. I cannot admit this. Every colour, as soon as it is decidedly exhibited to the eye, acts with equal force for the production of the 'demanded colour.' The only point is, that our eye should be in the right mood, that the sunlight should offer no impediment by overbrightness, and that the ground should not be unfavourable to the reception of the 'demanded' image. Generally, we must take care not to make too subtle distinctions and definitions with

* Literally "satiated" (*gesättigt*).—*Trans.*

respect to colours, as we are too easily exposed to the danger of being led from the essential into the non-essential, from the true into the false, and from the simple into the intricate."

I noted down this as a good doctrine for my studies. In the mean while, the time for the theatre had arrived, and I prepared to set out. "Mind," said Goethe, laughing, as he took leave of me, "that you are able to get over the horrors of 'Thirty Years of a Gamester's Life' this evening."

Friday, April 10, 1829.

"While we are waiting for our soup, I will provide you with refreshment for your eyes."

With these friendly words, Goethe placed before me a volume, containing landscapes of Claude Lorraine.

These were the first productions of this great master which I had seen. The impression they made upon me was extraordinary; and my surprise and rapture rose with every leaf I turned over.

The power of the shadowy masses on either side, the splendid sunlight from the background, and its reflection in the water, producing a clear and decisive impression, struck me as the always-recurring maxim upon art of the great master. I was also delighted to find each picture quite a little world by itself, in which there was nothing that was not in conformity with, and did not advance, the ruling thought. Whether it was a seaport with vessels at anchor, active fishermen and magnificent buildings on the water's edge, or a lonely barren hill-country, with its grazing goats, little brook and bridge, a few low bushes, and a shady tree,

under which a reposing shepherd was piping, or a marshy spot, with standing pools, which in the powerful summer-heat gives a pleasant impression of coolness, there was always complete unity in the picture; nowhere a trace of anything foreign that did not belong to its element.

"Here you see, for once, a complete man," said Goethe, "who thought and felt beautifully, and in whose mind lay a world, such as you will not easily find out of doors. The pictures have the highest truth, but no trace of actuality. Claude Lorraine knew the real world by heart, down to the minutest details, and used it only as a means to express the world of his beautiful soul. That is the true ideality which can so use real means that the truth evolved produces an illusion as if it were an actuality."

"This, I think, is good doctrine," said I, "and would apply as well to poetry as to the plastic arts."

"Even so," replied Goethe. "Meanwhile, you had better defer the further enjoyment of the admirable Claude till after dinner; for the pictures are too good to look at many of them at once."

"That is my feeling," said I, "for a certain fear comes over me when I am about to turn to the following leaf. It is a fear of a peculiar kind which is inspired by these beauties, and we have a similar feeling with an excellent book, when a crowd of excellent passages compel us to stop, and we loiter a little as we proceed."

"I have answered the King of Bavaria," said Goethe, after a pause, "and you shall read my letter."

"That will be very instructive for me," said I, "and will afford me much pleasure."

"In the mean while," said Goethe, "there is in the 'Allgemeine Zeitung' a poem to the King, which the Chancellor read to me yesterday, and which you must see likewise."

Goethe gave me the paper, and I read the poem to myself.

"Now, what do you say to it?" said Goethe.

"They are," I replied, "the feelings of a *dilettante* who has more good-will than talent, and to whom the high state of literature presents language ready made, which sings and rhymes for him, while he imagines that he himself is speaking."

"You are perfectly right," said he; "I also think the poem a very weak production. It bears no trace of external observation; it is wholly mental, and that not in the right way."

"To write a poem well," said I, "requires great knowledge of the subject; and he who has not, like Claude Lorraine, a whole world at command, will seldom produce anything good, with the best ideal tendencies."

"And then," said Goethe, "only an innate talent knows what is really to be done, while others, more or less, go on blundering."

"The æsthetic teachers," said I, "are a proof of this; for scarcely one of them knows what properly should be taught, and hence they complete the perplexity of young poets. Instead of treating of the Real, they treat of the Ideal; and instead of helping the young poet to what he has not, they confuse him

about what he has. He who, for instance, has by nature wit and humour, will use these powers to the best advantage, if scarcely conscious that he is endowed with them; but he who allows himself to be influenced by the much-lauded treatises upon these high qualities, will be disturbed in the innocent use of his powers, consciousness will paralyze these powers, and instead of the aid he desires, he will find himself incalculably impeded."

"You are quite right," he replied, "and a great deal might be said on that chapter."

"I have," he continued, "been reading the new epic by Egon Ebert; and you must read it too, that we may help him out a little. He is really a superior talent, but this new poem lacks the proper poetical foundation—the foundation of reality. The external landscapes, sunset, and sunrise,—passages where the external world was his own,—could not be better done. But the rest, which lies in ages gone by, and belongs to tradition, is not painted with its proper truth, and lacks the right kernel. The Amazons, with their life and actions, are described in that general way which young people esteem poetic and romantic, and which usually passes for such in the æsthetic world."

"This is a fault," said I, "which pervades the whole of our present literature. Special truth is avoided, for fear it should not be poetical, and thus we fall into commonplaces."

"Egon Ebert," said Goethe, "should have adhered to the chronicles; he would then have made something of his poem. When I remember how Schiller studied tradition, what trouble he gave himself about

Switzerland when he wrote his 'Tell,' and how Shakspeare used the chronicles, and took into his plays whole passages word for word, I am inclined to prescribe the same course to a young poet of the present day. I have, in my 'Clavigo,' made use of whole passages from the 'Memoirs' of Beaumarchais."

"But they are so worked up," said I, "that the fact is not observed, and the passages do not stand out like an indigested mass."

"If it is so," said Goethe, "that is as it should be. Beaumarchais was a mad fellow, and you must read his 'Memoirs.' Lawsuits were his element, in which alone he felt truly at home. There are still in existence speeches from one of his lawsuits, which may be ranked among the most remarkable, the most full of talent, and the boldest which have ever been known of their kind. However, Beaumarchais lost this same famous lawsuit. As he was going down the stairs from the court, he met the Chancellor coming up. Beaumarchais ought to have given place, but he would not, and insisted that each should take half the stair. The Chancellor, insulted in his dignity, commanded his people to push Beaumarchais aside, which they did. Beaumarchais immediately returned into court, and began an action against the Chancellor, which he gained."

I was pleased with this anecdote, and we continued talking over various things.

"I have now taken up 'My Second Residence in Rome' once more," said Goethe, "that I may finally get rid of it, and turn my attention to something else. You know that my published Italian journey was entirely compiled from letters. But the letters which

I wrote during my second visit to Rome, are not of such a kind that I can make an advantageous use of them; they contain too many references to home and my connections in Weimar, and show too little of my Italian life. Yet there are many utterances which express my inward life at the same time. Now, I think of extracting these passages, and inserting them in my narrative, to which they will give tone and harmony."

I found this plan perfectly judicious, and confirmed Goethe in his intentions.

"It has at all times been said and repeated, that man should strive to know himself. This is a singular requisition, with which no one complies, or indeed ever will comply. Man is by all his senses and efforts directed to externals—to the world around him, and he has to know this so far, and to make it so far serviceable, as he requires for his own ends. It is only when he feels joy or sorrow that he knows anything about himself, and only by joy or sorrow is he instructed what to seek and what to shun. Altogether, man is a darkened being; he knows not whence he comes, nor whither he goes; he knows little of the world, and least of himself. I know not myself, and God forbid I should! But what I wished to say is this, that in my fortieth year, while living in Italy, I became wise enough to know thus much of myself—that I had no talent for plastic art, and that this tendency of mine was a false one. If I drew anything, I had not a sufficient inclination for the corporeal. I felt a certain fear lest objects should press too much upon me, and the weak and moderate was more to my taste. If I drew a landscape, and got through the back and middle

ground, I never dared to give force enough to the foreground, so that my pictures never produced the proper effect. Then I made no progress except by practice, and was always obliged to begin again, if I left off for a while. Yet I was not absolutely destitute of talent, especially for landscape, and Hackert often said,—‘ If you will stay with me eighteen months, you will produce something which will give pleasure to yourself and others.’ ”

I listened with great interest.

“ But how,” said I, “ can one be sure that one possesses a real talent for plastic art ? ”

“ Real talent,” said Goethe, “ has an innate sense for form, relations, and colour, so as soon to manage all that well with but little guidance. Especially, it has a sense for the corporeal, and an inclination to make it palpable by judicious distribution of light. Even in the intervals of practice, it progresses and grows inwardly. Such a talent is not hard to recognise, but is best recognised by a master.”

“ I visited the palace this morning,” continued he, in a lively tone. “ The apartments of the Grand Duchess show great taste ; and Coudray has, with his Italians, given another proof of his talent. The painters were still busy with the walls ; they were Milanese. I spoke Italian with them, and found that I had not lost the power. The language brings back, as it were, the atmosphere of the country. They told me that they had last painted the château of the King of Würtemberg, and that they had then been summoned to Gotha, where, however, they could not come to any agreement. They had been heard of in Weimar

at the same time, and had come here to decorate the apartments of the Grand Duchess. I listened, and was pleased to speak Italian once more, for the language brings with it, as it were, the atmosphere of the country. These worthy people have been absent from Italy three years, but, as they tell me, they intend to go straight home from hence, when they have finished painting a scene for our theatre by order of Herr von Spiegel. This, probably, you will deem a piece of good news. They are very clever fellows. One is pupil of the best scene-painter in Milan; and you may therefore expect a good scene."

After Frederick had cleared the table, Goethe had a small plan of Rome laid before him.

"Rome," said he, "would not do for the permanent abode of people like us. He who would settle there must marry and turn Catholic, else would he lead an insupportable existence. Hackert is not a little proud of having lived there so long a Protestant."

Goethe then showed me, on the plan, the most remarkable squares and buildings. "This," said he, "is the Farnese garden."

"Was it not here," said I, "that you wrote the witch-scene, in 'Faust?'"

"No," he replied, "in the Borghese garden."

I now refreshed myself with more landscapes by Claude, and we said a great deal about this excellent master.

"Could not now a young artist," said I, "model himself upon him?"

"He who had a similar mind," answered Goethe, "would certainly develop great excellence by forming

himself on Claude Lorraine. But he whose soul nature had not endowed with similar gifts, would at most only borrow single peculiarities from this master, and use them as mere phrases."

Saturday, April 11, 1829.

I found the table laid out to-day in the long hall for several persons. Goethe and Frau von Goethe received me very kindly. The guests gradually arrived, viz., Madame Schopenhauer; young Count Reinhard, of the French embassy; his brother-in-law, Herr von D—— who was on his way to enter into the Russian service against the Turks; Fräulein Ulrica; and, lastly, Hofrath Vogel.

Goethe was in an especially cheerful mood, and entertained the company before dinner with some good Frankfort jokes, especially relating to Rothschild and Bethmann, showing how one had spoiled the speculations of the other.

Count Reinhard went to Court; the rest of us sat down to dinner. Conversation became very animated. They talked about travelling and the bathing-places; and Madame Schopenhauer especially interested us about the arrangement of her estate on the Rhine, near the Island Nonnenwerth.

At dessert, Count Reinhard reappeared, and was praised for the activity with which, during his short absence, he had not only dined at Court, but had changed his dress twice. He brought the intelligence that the new Pope—a Castiglioni—was elected, and Goethe gave the company an account of the traditional ceremonies observed at the election.

Count Reinhard, who had passed the winter at Paris,

was able to give us a great deal of desirable information about celebrated statesmen, literati, and poets. We talked about Chateaubriand, Guizot, Salvandy, Béranger, Merimée, and others.

After dinner, when all except myself had departed, Goethe took me into his work-room, and showed me two very interesting papers, with which I was highly pleased. These were two letters written in his youth, one in 1770, from Strasburg, to his friend Dr. Horn, at Frankfort; one in July, the other in December. In both spoke a young man who had a presentiment of great things which lay before him to do. In the last, traces of "Werther" were already visible; the Sesenheim connection had been formed, and the happy youth seemed rocked in an extasy of the sweetest feelings, and to be lavishing away his days as if half in a dream. The handwriting of the letters was calm, clear, and elegant; it had already assumed the character it always afterwards preserved. I could not forbear reading again and again these charming letters, and left Goethe full of the happiest and most grateful feelings.

Sunday, April 12, 1829.

Goethe read me his answer to the King of Bavaria. He had represented himself as one who actually ascends the steps of the villa, and expresses his feelings by word of mouth in the King's immediate presence.

"It must be difficult," said I, "to preserve exactly the proper tone and manner for such cases."

"No one," said Goethe, "who, during his whole life, has had to do with persons of high rank as I have, will find it difficult. The only point is not to be per-

fectly natural, but always to keep within the line of a certain conventional propriety."

Goethe then spoke of the compilation of his "Second Residence at Rome," which now occupied him.

"From the letters," said he, "which I wrote at that period, I plainly see that we have certain advantages and disadvantages at every time of life, as compared with earlier or later periods. Thus, in my fortieth year, I was as clear and decided on some subjects as at present, and in many respects superior to my present self; yet now, in my eightieth, I possess advantages which I should not like to exchange for those."

"While you made that remark," said I, "the metamorphosis of plants came before my eyes, and I can well understand that one would not return from the period of the flower to that of the green leaf, and from that of the fruit or seed to the flower-state."

"The simile," said Goethe, "expresses my meaning perfectly."

"Only imagine a perfectly indented leaf," he continued, laughing; "do you think that it would go back from its state of free development to the dull confinement of the cotyledon? And, indeed, it is an interesting fact that we have a plant which may serve as a symbol of the most advanced age, since, having passed the period of flower and fruit, it still thrives cheerfully without further foundation."

"It is bad, however, that we are so hindered in life by false tendencies, and never know them to be false until we are already freed from them."

“ But how,” said I, “ shall we know that a tendency is false ? ”

“ A false tendency,” replied Goethe, “ is not productive ; or if it is, what it produces is of no worth. It is not so difficult to perceive this in others ; but with respect to oneself the case is different, and great freedom of mind is required. And even knowledge of the truth is not always of use ; we delay, doubt, cannot resolve—just as one finds it difficult to leave a beloved girl of whose infidelity one has long had repeated proofs. This I say, because I remember how many years were required before I could find out that my tendency to plastic art was a false one, and how many more, after I was sure of this fact, to separate myself entirely from it.”

“ But,” said I, “ that tendency has been of such advantage to you, one can hardly call it false.”

“ I gained insight by it,” said Goethe, “ and therefore I can make myself easy about it. That is the advantage we draw from every false tendency. He who with inadequate talent devotes himself to music, will never, indeed, become a master, but may learn to know and to value a masterly production. With all my toil, I have not become an artist ; but, as I tried every department of art, I have learned to take cognizance of each stroke, and to distinguish merits from defects. This is no small gain ; and, indeed, false tendencies are rarely without gain. Thus the Crusades, for the liberation of the holy sepulchre, manifestly represented a false tendency ; but they did this good, they weakened the Turks, and prevented them from becoming masters of Europe.”

We talked on various subjects, and Goethe then spoke to me of a book on Peter the Great, by Segur, which had interested him, and given him much light.

“The situation of Petersburg,” said he, “is quite unpardonable, especially when we reflect that the ground rises in the neighbourhood, and that the Emperor could have had a city quite free from all this trouble arising from overflow of the stream, if he had but gone a little higher up, and had only had the haven in this low place. An old shipmaster represented this to him, and prophesied that the people would be drowned every seventy years. There stood also an old tree, with various marks from times when the waters had risen to a great height. But all this was in vain; the Emperor stood to his whim, and had the tree cut down, that it might not bear witness against him.

“You will confess that such conduct is very strange in so great a man. Do you know how I explain it?—Man cannot cast aside his youthful impressions; and this principle goes so far, that even defects to which he is accustomed in his early years, and in the midst of which he has passed his happiest time, remain afterwards so dear to him that he is dazzled by them, and cannot perceive any fault. Thus would Peter the Great repeat Amsterdam, so dear to his youth, in a metropolis at the mouth of the Neva; as the Dutch are always tempted to build new Amsterdams over and over again in their new possessions.”

Monday, April 13, 1829.

To-day, after Goethe had said many good things to

me at dinner, I again refreshed myself at dessert with some of Claude's landscapes.

"The collection," said Goethe, "bears the title *Liber Veritatis*; it might as well be styled *Liber Naturæ et Artis*,—for here we find nature and art in the highest state and fairest union."

I asked Goethe about the origin of Claude Lorraine, and in what school he had formed himself.

"His immediate master," said Goethe, "was Antonio Tasso, but Tasso was a pupil of Paul Brill, so that the school and maxims of the latter formed the real foundation of Claude, and came to their full blossom in him; for what appeared too earnest and severe in those masters, is, in Claude Lorraine, developed to the most charming grace and loveliest freedom. There was no going beyond him.

"However, it is difficult to say from whom so great a talent, living in so remarkable a time and situation, actually did learn. He looked about, and appropriated to himself everything which could afford nourishment to his designs. No doubt Claude Lorraine was as much indebted to the Caracci school as to his immediate and nominal masters.

"Thus, it is usual to say Giulio Romano was a pupil of Raffaele; but we might, with as much propriety, say he was the pupil of his age. Only Guido Reni had a pupil, who received so entirely into himself the spirit, soul, and art of his master, that he almost was, and did almost exactly, the same as he. This was a peculiar case, which has scarcely been repeated.

"The Caracci school, on the contrary, was of a liberating kind, so that each talent was developed by it in

its natural direction, and masters proceeded from it all entirely different one from another. The Caracci seemed born to be teachers of art; they lived in a time when the best had already been done on every side, and hence they could present their pupils with models in all departments. They were great artists, great teachers; but I could not say they were truly gifted with the spirit (*Geistreich*).^{*} It is a somewhat bold saying, but so it seems to me."

After I had looked at a few more landscapes of Claude's, I opened an artist's lexicon, to see what is said of this great master. We found—"his chief merit was in his *palette*."

We looked at one another, and laughed.

"There, you see," said Goethe, "how much we learn if we rely on books, and take in all we find written."

Tuesday, April 14, 1829.

When I went in to-day, Goethe was at table with Hofrath Meyer, talking about Italy and art. He ordered a volume of Claude Lorraine to be laid before us, in which Meyer found the landscape of which the newspapers told us that Peel had given four thousand pounds for the original. One must admit that it is a beautiful picture, and that Mr. Peel has made no bad bargain.

On the right side of the picture is a group of people sitting and standing. A shepherd is leaning over a girl, whom he seems to be instructing to play upon the pipe.

^{*} "*Geistreich*" frequently means little more than clever or ingenious; but it seems here to have a deeper signification, and the term "gifted with the spirit" has been borrowed from the American.—*Trans.*

In the middle is a lake, in the full light of the sun; on the left, are cattle grazing in the shade of a grove. The two groups balance one another admirably, and the light has a magical effect, in the artist's usual manner. There was then a discussion as to where the original had long been, and in whose possession Meyer had seen it when in Italy.

Conversation then turned on the new property of the King of Bavaria at Rome. "I know the villa very well," said Meyer; "I have often been there, and still think with pleasure of the situation.

"The house is of moderate size. The King, no doubt, will adorn it, and make it agreeable according to his taste. In my time, the Duchess Amelia lived there, and Herder in the next house. Afterwards, the Duke of Sussex and the Earl of Munster lived there. Strangers of high rank have always liked it, on account of the healthy situation and superb prospect."

I asked Meyer how far it was from the Villa di Malta to the Vatican.

"From Trinita di Monte, which is near the villa, and where the artists lived," said Meyer, "it is a good half league. We went over the ground daily, and often more than once."

"The road by the bridge," said I, "seems somewhat circuitous; I should think it would be a shorter way to cross the Tiber and go through the fields."

"It is not so," said Meyer; "but we had this notion, and often crossed the Tiber. I remember one occasion when we were returning on a fine moonlight night from the Vatican. Of our acquaintance, Bury, Hirt, and Lips were with us, and we were engaged in

the customary dispute,—which is the greater, Raffaele or Michael Angelo? So engaged, we entered the ferry. When we had reached the opposite shore, and the argument was still at its height, some wag—I think it was Bury—proposed we should remain upon the water till the strife was quite settled, and the parties agreed. The proposal was acceded to, and the boatman had to put off and row back. Now the dispute began to grow animated, and when we reached the shore we were always forced to put back, for the contest was not decided. Thus we went on, hour after hour, which suited nobody better than the boatman, who had an addition of *bajocchi* each time. He had with him, as an assistant, a boy of twelve years old, to whom our conduct at last appeared strange.

“ ‘Father,’ said he, ‘what is the matter with these men that they will not land, but we must always keep going back when we reach the shore?’ ”

“ ‘I know not, my son,’ replied the boatman; ‘but I think they are mad.’ ”

“ At last, in order not to row to and fro the whole night, we came to a forced agreement, and landed.”

We laughed at this pleasant anecdote of artistic madness. Hofrath Meyer was in the best humour; he continued to tell us about Rome, and Goethe and I took pleasure in listening to him.

“ This dispute about Raffaele and Michael Angelo,” said Meyer, “ was the order of the day, and was introduced whenever a number of artists met together large enough to take the two sides. It generally began at an inn, where we drank cheap good wine. Pictures, and parts of pictures, were referred to, and when the

opposition party would not concede this or that, an immediate inspection of the pictures was found requisite. We left the inn and hurried to the Sistine Chapel, the keys of which were in the hands of a shoemaker, who would always open the door for a few groschen. When we were before the pictures the work of demonstration began, and after the dispute had lasted long enough we returned to the inn, to make up our differences over a bottle of wine, and to settle all controversies. Thus we went on every day, and the shoemaker, by the Sistine Chapel, received many a fee of four groschen."

Mention was then made of another shoemaker, who generally hammered his leather on an antique marble head. "It was the portrait of a Roman emperor," said Meyer; "the antique work stood before the shoemaker's door, and we often saw him engaged in this laudable occupation as we passed by."

Wednesday, April 15, 1829.

We talked of people who, without having any real talent, are excited to productiveness, and of others who write about things they do not understand.

"What seduces young people," said Goethe, "is this—we live in a time in which so much culture is diffused, that it has communicated itself, as it were, to the atmosphere which a young man breathes. Poetical and philosophic thoughts live and move within him, he has sucked them in with his very breath, but he thinks they are his own property, and utters them as such. But after he has restored to the time what he has received from it, he remains poor. He is like a fountain which

plays for a while with the water with which it is supplied, but which ceases to flow as soon as the liquid treasure is exhausted."

Tuesday, September 1, 1829.

I told Goethe of a person now travelling through Weimar, who had heard a lecture of Hegel's on the proof of the existence of a God. Goethe agreed with me, that the time for such lectures was gone by.

"The period of doubt," said he, "is past; men now doubt as little the existence of a God as their own, though the nature of the divinity, the immortality, the peculiarities of our own souls, and their connection with our bodies, are eternal problems, with respect to which our philosophers take us no farther. A French philosopher, of the most recent times, begins his chapter confidently thus:—

"‘It is acknowledged that man consists of two parts, body and soul; accordingly, we will begin with the body, and then speak of the soul.’

"Fichte went a little farther, and extricated himself somewhat more cleverly from the dilemma, by saying—‘We shall treat of man regarded as a body, and of man regarded as a soul.’ He felt too well that a so closely combined whole could not be separated. Kant has unquestionably done the best service, by drawing the limits beyond which human intellect is not able to penetrate, and leaving at rest the insoluble problems. What a deal have people philosophized about immortality—and how far have they got? I doubt not of our immortality, for nature cannot dispense with the *entelecheia*. But we are not all, in like manner, immortal; and he who would manifest

himself in future as a great *entelecheia*, must be one now.

“ While the Germans are tormenting themselves with the solution of philosophical problems, the English, with their great practical understanding, laugh at us, and win the world. Everybody knows their declamations against the slave-trade; and while they have palmed upon us all sorts of humane maxims as the real foundation of their proceedings, it is at last discovered that their true motive is a practical object, which the English always notoriously require in order to act, and which should have been known before. In their extensive domains on the western coast of Africa they themselves use the blacks, and it is against their interest for them to be carried off. They have founded large colonies of negroes in America, which are very productive, and yearly return a large profit in blacks. From these they can supply the demand in North America, and since they thus carry on a highly profitable trade, an importation from without would be against their commercial interests; so they preach with a practical view against the inhuman African slave-trade. Even at the Congress of Vienna, the English envoy denounced it with great zeal, but the Portuguese envoy had the good sense to reply quietly, that he did not know they had come together to sit in judgment on the world, or to decide upon principles of morality. He well knew the object of England; and he had also his own, which he knew how to plead for and obtain.”

Sunday, December 6, 1829.

To-day, after dinner, Goethe read me the first scene

of the second act of "Faust."* The effect was great, and gave me a high satisfaction. We are once more transported into Faust's study, where Mephistophiles finds all just as he had left it. He takes from the hook Faust's old study-gown, and a thousand moths and insects flutter out from it. By the directions of Mephistophiles as to where these are to settle down, the locality is brought very clearly before our eyes. He puts on the gown, while Faust lies behind a curtain, in a state of paralysis, intending to play the doctor's part once more. He pulls the bell, which gives such an awful tone among the old solitary convent-halls, that the doors spring open and the walls tremble. The servant rushes in, and finds in Faust's seat Mephistophiles, whom he does not recognise, but for whom he has respect. In answer to inquiries he gives news of Wagner, who has now become a celebrated man, and is hoping for the return of his master. He is, we hear, at this moment deeply occupied in his laboratory, seeking to produce a Homunculus. The servant retires, and the Bachelor enters,—the same whom we knew some years before as a shy young student, when Mephistophiles (in Faust's gown) made game of him. He is now become a man, and is so full of conceit that even Mephistophiles can do nothing with him, but moves his chair further and further, and at last addresses the pit.

Goethe read the scene quite to the end. I was pleased with his youthful productive strength, and with the closeness of the whole. "As the conception,"

* That is, the second act of the second part of "Faust," which was not published entire till after Goethe's death.—*Trans.*

said Goethe, "is so old—for I have had it in my mind for fifty years—the materials have accumulated to such a degree, that the difficult operation is to separate and reject. The invention of the whole second part is really as old as I say; but it may be an advantage that I have not written it down till now, when my knowledge of the world is so much clearer. I am like one who in his youth has a great deal of small silver and copper money, which in the course of his life he constantly changes for the better, so that at last the property of his youth stands before him in pieces of pure gold."

We spoke about the character of the Bachelor. "Is he not meant," said I, "to represent a certain class of ideal philosophers?"

"No," said Goethe, "the arrogance which is peculiar to youth, and of which we had such striking examples after our war for freedom, is personified in him. Indeed, every one believes in his youth that the world really began with him, and that all merely exists for his sake.

"Thus, in the East, there was actually a man who every morning collected his people about him, and would not go to work till he had commanded the sun to rise. But he was wise enough not to speak his command till the sun of its own accord was really on the point of appearing."

Goethe remained a while absorbed in silent thought; then he began as follows:—

"When one is old one thinks of worldly matters otherwise than when one is young. Thus I cannot but think that the demons, to tease and make sport

with men, have placed among them single figures, which are so alluring that every one strives after them, and so great that nobody reaches them. Thus they set up Raffaele, with whom thought and act were equally perfect; some distinguished followers have approached him, but none have equalled him. Thus, too, they set up Mozart as something unattainable in music; and thus Shakspeare in poetry. I know what you can say against this thought; but I only mean natural character, the great innate qualities. Thus, too, Napoleon is unattainable. That the Russians were so moderate as not to go to Constantinople is indeed very great; but we find a similar trait in Napoleon, for he had the moderation not to go to Rome."

Much was associated with this copious theme; I thought to myself in silence that the demons had intended something of the kind with Goethe, inasmuch as he is a form too alluring not to be striven after, and too great to be reached.

Wednesday, December 16, 1829.

To-day, after dinner, Goethe read me the second scene of the second act of "Faust," where Mephistophiles visits Wagner, who is on the point of making a human being by chemical means. The work succeeds; the Homunculus appears in the phial, as a shining being, and is at once active. He repels Wagner's questions upon incomprehensible subjects; reasoning is not his business; he wishes to *act*, and begins with our hero, Faust, who, in his paralyzed condition, needs a higher aid. As a being to whom

the present is perfectly clear and transparent, the Homunculus sees into the soul of the sleeping Faust, who, enraptured by a lovely dream, beholds Leda visited by swans, while she is bathing in a pleasant spot. The Homunculus, by describing this dream, brings a most charming picture before our eyes. Mephistophiles sees nothing of it, and the Homunculus taunts him with his northern nature.

“Generally,” said Goethe, “you will perceive that Mephistophiles appears to disadvantage beside the Homunculus, who is like him in clearness of intellect, and so much superior to him in his tendency to the beautiful, and to a useful activity. He styles him cousin; for such spiritual beings as this Homunculus, not yet saddened and limited by a thorough assumption of humanity, were classed with the demons, and thus there is a sort of relationship between the two.”

“Certainly,” said I, “Mephistophiles appears here in a subordinate situation; yet I cannot help thinking that he has had a secret influence on the production of the Homunculus. We have known him in this way before; and, indeed, in the ‘Helena’ he always appears as a being secretly working. Thus he again elevates himself with regard to the whole, and in his lofty repose he can well afford to put up with a little in particulars.”

“Your feeling of the position is very correct,” said Goethe; “indeed, I have doubted whether I ought not to put some verses into the mouth of Mephistophiles as he goes to Wagner, and the Homunculus is still in a state of formation, so that his co-operation may be expressed and rendered plain to the reader.”

“It would do no harm,” said I. “Yet this is intimated by the words with which Mephistophiles closes the scene—

‘Am Ende hängen wir doch ab
Von Creaturen die wir machten.’”

We are dependent after all,
On creatures that we make.

“True,” said Goethe, “that would be almost enough for the attentive; but I will think about some additional verses.”

“But,” said I, “those concluding words are very great, and will not easily be penetrated to their full extent.”

“I think,” said Goethe, “I have given them a bone to pick. A father who has six sons is a lost man, let him do what he may. Kings and ministers, too, who have raised many persons to high places, may have something to think about from their own experience.”

Faust’s dream about Leda again came into my head, and I regarded this as a most important feature in the composition.

“It is wonderful to me,” said I, “how the several parts of such a work bear upon, perfect, and sustain one another! By this dream of Leda, ‘Helena’ gains its proper foundation. There we have a constant allusion to swans and the child of a swan; but here we have the act itself, and when we come afterwards to ‘Helena,’ with the sensible impression of such a situation, how much more clear and perfect does all appear!”

Goethe said I was right, and was pleased that I remarked this.

“ Thus you will see,” said he, “ that in these earlier acts the chords of the classic and romantic are constantly struck, so that, as on a rising ground, where both forms of poetry are brought out, and in some sort balance one another, we may ascend to ‘ Helena.’ ”

“ The French,” continued Goethe, “ now begin to think justly of these matters. Both classic and romantic, say they, are equally good. The only point is to use these forms with judgment, and to be capable of excellence. You can be absurd in both, and then one is as worthless as the other. This, I think, is rational enough, and may content us for a while.”

Sunday, December 20, 1829.

Dined with Goethe. We spoke of the Chancellor, and I asked whether he did not bring any news of Manzoni, on his return from Italy.

“ He wrote to me about him,” said Goethe. “ The Chancellor paid Manzoni a visit; he lives on his estate near Milan, and is, I am sorry to say, always indisposed.”

“ It is singular,” said I, “ that we so frequently find persons of distinguished talents, especially poets, with weak constitutions.”

“ The extraordinary performances of these men,” said Goethe, “ presuppose a very delicate organization, which makes them susceptible to unusual emotions, and capable of hearing celestial voices. Such an organization, in conflict with the world and the elements, is easily disturbed and injured; and he who

does not, like Voltaire, combine with great sensibility an equally uncommon toughness, is easily exposed to perpetual indisposition. Schiller was always ill. When I first knew him, I thought he could not live a month ; but he, too, had a certain toughness ; he sustained himself many years, and would have done so longer, if he had lived in a way more favourable to health."

We spoke of the theatre, and how far a certain performance had been successful.

" I have seen Unzelmann in the part," said Goethe. " It was always a pleasure to see him, on account of the perfect freedom of his mind, which he imparted to us ; for it is with acting as with all other arts. What the artist does or has done excites in us the mood in which he himself was when he did it. A free mood in the artist makes us free ; a constrained one makes us uncomfortable. We usually find this freedom of the artist where he is fully equal to his subject. It is on this account we are so pleased with Dutch pictures ; the artists painted the life around them, of which they were perfect masters. If we are to feel this freedom of mind in an actor, he must, by study, imagination, and natural disposition, be perfect master of his part, must have all bodily requisites at his command, and must be upheld by a certain youthful energy. But study is not enough without imagination, and study and imagination together are not enough without natural disposition. Women do the most through imagination and temperament ; thence came the excellence of Madame Wolff."

We pursued this subject further, talking of many of the chief actors of the Weimar stage, and mentioning

their performance in several parts with due acknowledgment.

In the mean while, "Faust" came once more into my head, and I talked of the manner in which the Homunculus could be rendered clear upon the stage. "If we do not see the little man himself," said I, "we must see the light in the bottle, and his important words must be uttered in a way that would surpass the capacity of a child."

"Wagner," said Goethe, "must not let the bottle go out of his hands, and the voice must sound as if it issued from the bottle. It would be a part for a ventriloquist such as I have heard. A man of that kind would solve the difficulty to a certainty."

We then talked of the Grand Carnival, and the possibility of representing it upon the stage. "It would be a little more than the market-place at Naples," said I.

"It would require a very large theatre," said Goethe, "and is hardly to be imagined."

"I hope to see it some day," was my answer. "I look forward with especial delight to the elephant, led by Prudence, and surmounted by Victory, with Hope and Fear in chains on each side. This is an allegory that could not easily be surpassed."

"The elephant would not be the first on the stage," said Goethe. "At Paris there is one, which forms an entire character. He belongs to a popular party, and takes the crown from one king and places it on another, which must indeed have an imposing effect. Then, when he is called at the end of the piece, he appears quite alone, makes his bow, and retires. You

see, therefore, that we might reckon on an elephant for our carnival. But the whole scene is much too large, and requires a manager such as is not easily found.

“ Still, it is so brilliant and effective,” said I, “ that a stage will scarcely allow it to escape. Then how does it build itself up, and become more and more striking ! First, there are the beautiful gardeners, male and female, who decorate the stage, and at the same time form a mass, so that the various objects, as they increase in importance, are never without spectators and a background. Then there is the team of dragons, which coming from the background, through the air, soars overhead. Then the appearance of the great Pan with the apparent fire, and its extinction by the wet clouds, which roll to the spot. If all this is carried out as you have conceived, the public will, in its amazement, confess that it has not sense and intellect sufficient to appreciate such a profusion of phenomena.”

“ Pray, no more about the public,” said Goethe ; “ I wish to hear nothing about it. The chief point is, that the piece is written ; the world may now do with it as it pleases, and use it as far as it can.”

We then talked of the “ Boy Lenker.”

“ That Faust is concealed under the mask of Plutus, and Mephistophiles under that of Avarice, you will have already perceived. But who is the ‘ Boy Lenker ? ’ ”

I hesitated, and could not answer.

“ It is Euphorion,” said Goethe.

“ But how can he appear in the carnival here,” asked I, “ when he is not born till the third act.

“ Euphorion,” replied Goethe, “ is not a human,

but an allegorical being. In him is personified poetry, which is bound to neither time, place, nor person. The same spirit who afterwards chooses to be Euphonia, appears here as the 'Boy Lenker,' and is so far like a spectre, that he can be present everywhere, and at all times.

Sunday, December 27, 1829.

To-day, after dinner, Goethe read me the scene of the paper-money.*

"You recollect," said he, "that at the imperial assembly the end of the song is that there is a want of money, and that Mephistophiles promises to provide some. This theme continues through the masquerade, when Mephistophiles contrives that the Emperor, while in the mask of the great Pan, shall sign a paper, which, being thus endowed with a money-value, is multiplied a thousand-fold and circulated. Now, in this scene the affair is discussed before the Emperor, who does not know what he has done. The treasurer hands over the bank-notes, and makes everything clear. The Emperor is at first enraged, but afterwards, on a closer inspection of his profit, makes splendid presents of paper-money to those around him, and as he retires drops some thousand crowns, which the fat court-fool picks up, and then goes off at once to turn his paper into land."

While Goethe read this noble scene, I was pleased with the happy notion of deducing the paper-money from Mephistophiles, and thus in so striking a manner bringing in and immortalizing one of the main interests of the present day.

* In the second part of "Faust."

Scarcely had the scene been read over and discussed, when Goethe's son came down and seated himself with us at the table. He told us of Cooper's last novel, which he had read, and which he now described admirably in his own graphic manner. We made no allusion to the scene we had just read, but he began of his own accord to tell a great deal about Prussian treasury-bills, and to say that they were paid for above their value. While young Goethe went on talking in this way, I looked at the father with a smile, which he returned, and thus we gave each other to understand how very *apropos* was the subject of the scene.

Wednesday, December 30, 1829.

To-day, after dinner, Goethe read me the next scene.

"Now they have got money at the imperial court," said he, "they want to be amused. The Emperor wishes to see Paris and Helen, and they are, through magical art, to appear in person. Since, however, Mephistophiles has nothing to do with Greek antiquity, and has no power over such personages, this task is assigned to Faust, who succeeds in it perfectly. The scene showing the means which Faust must adopt to render the apparition possible is not quite complete yet, but I will read it to you next time. The actual appearance of Paris and Helen you shall hear to-day."

I was happy in the anticipation of what was coming, and Goethe began to read. I saw the Emperor and his court pass through the ancient hall to witness the spectacle. The curtain rises, and the stage, representing a great temple, is before my eyes. Mephistophiles is in

the prompter's box, the astrologer is on one side of the proscenium, and Faust, with the tripod, on the other. He utters the necessary formula, and Paris appears rising from the fumes of incense. While this handsome youth is moving about to ethereal music, a description of him is given. He sits down, and leans with his arm bent on his head, as we find him in ancient sculptures. He is the delight of the ladies, who express how they are charmed by the bloom of his youth, and is hated by the men, who are moved by jealousy and hatred, and depreciate him as much as they can. Paris goes to sleep, and Helen makes her appearance. She approaches the sleeper, imprints a kiss upon his lips, retires from him, and then turns round to gaze at him. While in the act of turning, she looks especially charming, and makes the same impression on the men which Paris made upon the women. The men are inspired to love and praise, the women to envy, hatred, and detraction. Faust himself is quite enraptured, and at the aspect of the beauty which he has called forth forgets time, place, and circumstance, so that Mephistophiles finds it necessary to remind him every moment that he is getting out of his part. A mutual affection between Paris and Helen seems to increase, the youth clasps her to carry her away; Faust is about to tear him from her, but, when he turns the key towards him, a violent explosion ensues, the apparitions melt into vapour, and Faust falls paralyzed to the ground.

CONVERSATIONS OF GOETHE.

1830.



1830.

Sunday, January 3, 1830.

GOETHE showed me the English Annual, "The Keepsake," for 1830, with very fine engravings, and some extremely interesting letters from Lord Byron, which I read after dinner. He himself had taken up the latest French translation of his "Faust," by Gérard, which he turned over, and seemed occasionally to read.

"Some singular thoughts pass through my head," said he, "on reflecting that this book is now read in a language over which Voltaire ruled fifty years ago. You cannot understand my thoughts upon this subject, and have no idea of the influence which Voltaire and his great contemporaries had in my youth, and how they governed the whole civilized world. My biography does not clearly show what was the influence of these men in my youth, and what pains it cost me to defend myself against them, and to maintain my own ground in a true relation to nature."

We talked further about Voltaire, and Goethe recited to me his poem "Les Systèmes," from which I perceived how he must have studied and appropriated such things in early life.

He praised Gérard's translation as very successful, although mostly in prose.

"I do not like," he said, "to read my 'Faust,' any more in German, but in this French translation all seems again fresh, new, and spirited."

"'Faust,'" continued he, "is, however, quite incommensurable, and all attempts to bring it nearer to the understanding are in vain. Also, it should be considered that the first part is the product of a somewhat dark state in the individual. However, this very darkness has a charm for men's minds, and they work upon it till they are tired, as upon all insoluble problems."

Sunday, January 10, 1830.

This afternoon, Goethe afforded me great pleasure by reading the scene in which Faust visits the Mothers.

The novelty and unexpectedness of the subject, and Goethe's manner of reading the scene, struck me so forcibly, that I felt myself wholly transported into the situation of Faust when he shudders at the communication from Mephistophiles.

Although I had heard and felt the whole, yet so much remained an enigma to me, that I felt myself compelled to ask Goethe for some explanation. But he, in his usual manner, wrapped himself up in mystery, as he looked on me with wide open eyes, and repeated the words—

"'Die Mütter! Mütter! 's klingt so wunderbarlich.'"

The Mothers! Mothers! nay, it sounds so strange.

"I can reveal to you no more," said he, "except that I found, in Plutarch, that in ancient Greece men—

tion was made of the Mothers as divinities. This is all that I owe to others, the rest is my own invention. Take the manuscript home with you, study it carefully, and see what you can make of it."

I was very happy while studying this remarkable scene once more in quiet, and took the following view of the peculiar character and influence, the abode and outward circumstances, of the Mothers :—

Could we imagine that that huge sphere our earth had an empty space in its centre, so that one might go hundreds of miles in one direction, without coming in contact with anything corporeal, this would be the abode of those unknown goddesses to whom Faust descends. They live, as it were, beyond all place ; for nothing stands firm in their neighbourhood : they also live beyond all time ; for no heavenly body shines upon them which can rise or set, and mark the alternation of day and night.

Thus, dwelling in eternal obscurity and loneliness, these Mothers are creative beings ; they are the creating and sustaining principle from which everything proceeds that has life and form on the surface of the earth. Whatever ceases to breathe returns to them as a spiritual nature, and they preserve it until a fit occasion arises to come into existence anew. All souls and forms of what has been, or will be, hover about like clouds in the vast space of their abode. So are the Mothers surrounded, and the magician must enter their dominion, if he would obtain power over the form of a being, and call back former existences to seeming life.

The eternal metamorphosis of earthly existence,

birth and growth, destruction and new formation, are thus the unceasing care of the Mothers; and, as in everything which receives new life on earth, the female principle is most in operation, these creating divinities are rightly thought of as female, and the august title of Mothers may be given to them not without reason.

All this is, indeed, no more than a poetic creation; but the limited human mind cannot penetrate much further, and is contented to find something on which it can repose. Upon earth we see phenomena, and feel effects, of which we do not know whence they come and whither they go. We infer a spiritual origin—something divine, of which we have no notion, and for which we have no expression, and which we must draw down to ourselves, and *anthropomorphize*, that we may in some degree embody and make comprehensible our dark forebodings.

Thus have arisen all mythi, which from century to century have lived among nations, and, in like manner, this new one of Goethe's, which has at least the appearance of some natural truth, and may be reckoned among the best that was ever devised.

(Sup.*) Monday, January 18, 1830.

Goethe spoke of Lavater, and said a great deal in praise of his character. He also related to me traits of their early intimate friendship, and how in former times they had often slept in the same bed. "It is to be regretted," continued he, "that a weak mysticism so soon set bounds to the flight of his genius."

(Sup.*) Friday, January 22, 1830.

We spoke about the History of Napoleon by Wal-

ter Scott. "It is true," said Goethe, "that the author may be reproached with great inaccuracy, and equally great partiality, but even these two defects give to his work particular value in my eyes. The success of the book, in England, was great beyond all expectation; and hence we see that Walter Scott, in this very hatred for Napoleon and the French, has been the true interpreter and representative of the English popular opinion and national feeling. His book will not be by any means a document for the history of France, but it will be one for the history of England. At all events, it is a voice which could not be wanting in this important historical process.

"It is generally agreeable to me to hear the most contrary opinions of Napoleon. I am now reading the work by Bignon, which appears to me to possess particular merit."

Sunday, January 24, 1830.

"I have lately received a letter from a celebrated salt-miner at Stotternheim," said Goethe, "which opens in a remarkable manner, and which I must communicate to you."

"I have had an experience," he writes, "which will not be lost upon me. But what follows this introduction? Nothing less than a loss of at least a thousand dollars. The shaft, whence you go down twelve hundred feet to the rock-salt, through a soft soil and stone, he has incautiously neglected to prop up at the sides. The soft soil has detached itself, and has so filled up the pit, that an extremely expensive operation is required to get it out again. He will, then, at a depth of twelve hundred feet, put in metal

pipes, to be secure against the consequences of a similar mischance. He should have done this at once, and he certainly would have done it, were there not in such people a degree of rashness of which we have no notion, and which is requisite for such enterprises. He is very easy about his misfortune, and writes, 'I have had an experience which will not be lost upon me.' This is quite the sort of man that one likes; a man who, without complaining, is at once active again, and always on his feet. What say you to it? Is it not good?"

"It reminds me of Sterne," I replied, "who complains that he had not used his sorrows like a reasonable man."

"It is something similar," said Goethe.

"I am also reminded of Behrisch," continued I, "when he tells you what experience is. I have lately been reading the chapter for renewed edification.*

"'Experience,' says he, "'is nothing else than that one experiences by experience what one would not willingly have experienced.'"

"Yes," said Goethe, smiling, "such are the old jokes with which we so shamefully wasted our time."

"Behrisch," said I, "seems to have been a man full of grace and elegance. How pleasant is the joke in the wine-cellar, where he tries to prevent the young man from visiting his mistress, and accomplishes this in the pleasantest manner, fastening on his sword—now this way, now that—till he makes everybody

* That is to say, in Goethe's Autobiography (*Dichtung und Wahrheit*), Part II. Book vii.—*Trans.*

laugh, and causes the young man to forget the appointed time."

"Yes," said Goethe, "that was pleasant; it would have been one of the most attractive scenes on the stage; indeed, Behrisch was altogether a good character for the theatre."

We then talked over all the oddities told of Behrisch in Goethe's "Life"; his gray clothes, where silk, satin, and wool made strong contrasts one with another, and his constant care always to dress himself in a new gray. Then how he wrote poems, imitated the compositor, and extolled the dignity of the penman; and how it was his favourite pastime to lie at the window, to observe the dress of the passers-by, and in his thoughts so to alter it that the people would have been highly ridiculous if so attired.

"Then his ordinary joke with the postman; how do you like it? is not that droll?"

"I do not know it," said I; "there is nothing about it in your memoirs."

"Strange!" said Goethe, "then I will tell it you. When we were lying together at the window, and Behrisch saw the letter-carrier coming up the street, and going from one house to another, he would take out a groschen, and lay it by him on the window-sill.

"Do you see the letter-carrier?" said he, turning to me. "He is coming nearer and nearer, and will be over here immediately, I can see: he has a letter for you; and what a letter! no ordinary affair, but a letter with a check in it; with a check for—I will not say how much; see, he is coming in. No! but he will

come immediately. There he is again. Now! Here! here! my friend, this is the place! He goes by—how stupid! O, how stupid! how can one be so stupid, and act so unjustifiably! Unjustifiably in two respects! Unjustifiably towards you, to whom he does not bring the check which he had in his hands; and quite unjustifiably towards himself, to lose this groschen, which I had taken out for him, and which I now put up again.’ Then, with the greatest dignity, he would put the groschen again into his pocket, and we had something to laugh at.”

I was amused with this anecdote, which was quite of a piece with the rest. I asked Goethe whether he had ever seen Behrisch in later days.

“I saw him again,” said Goethe, “soon after my arrival at Weimar, about the year 1776, when in company with the Duke I made a visit to Dessau, whither Behrisch had been invited as tutor of the Crown Prince. I found him the same as ever—as a polished courtier of the best humour.”

“What did he say,” asked I, “about your becoming so famous in the interval.”

“‘Did I not tell you so,’ were his first words, ‘was it not right that you did not have your verses printed then, and that you waited till you had done something really good? the things were indeed not so bad, otherwise I should not have written them out. If we had remained together, you should not have had even the others printed. I would have copied them out for you, and they would have gone off quite as well.’ You see he was the same as ever. He was liked at Court. I always saw him at the Prince’s table. I saw him for

the last time in the year 1801, when he had become old, but was still in the best humour. He occupied some very handsome apartments in the castle, one of which he completely filled with geraniums, which were then all the rage. Now the botanists had made some distinctions and divisions among the geraniums, and had given a certain class the name of pelargoniums. This the old gentleman could not bear, and he abused the botanists sorely. ‘The blockheads!’ said he, ‘I think I have filled my room with geraniums, and now they come in and tell me they are pelargoniums. What have I to do with them if they are not geraniums, and what have I to do with pelargoniums.’ Thus he would go on for the half hour together, and you will see that he quite kept up his old character.”

We then talked about the “Classical Walpurgis-night,”* the beginning of which Goethe had lately read me.

“The mythological figures which crowd upon me,” said he, “are innumerable, but I restrain myself, and merely select those that produce the proper pictorial effect. Faust has now met Chiron, and I hope I shall be successful with the scene. If I work hard I shall have done the Walpurgis-night in a couple of months. Nothing more shall take me off ‘Faust,’ for it will be odd enough if I live to finish it, and yet it is possible. The fifth act is as good as done, and the fourth will almost write itself.”

Goethe then talked about his health, and congratulated himself about keeping so constantly well. “My good state of preservation,” said he, “I owe to Vogel—

* In the second part of “Faust.”—*Trans.*

without him I should have gone off long ago. Vogel was born for a physician, and is one of the most decided geniuses I ever knew. However, we will not say how good he is, for fear he should be taken away from us."

(Sup.*) Monday, January 25, 1830.

I brought Goethe the indexes of Dumont's literary remains, which I had made as a preparation for their publication. Goethe read them with great attention, and appeared astonished at the mass of knowledge, interest, and ideas, which he had reason to suppose existed in the author of such varied and copious manuscripts.

"Dumont," said he, "must have possessed a mind of great extent. Amongst the subjects which he has treated there is not one which is not interesting and important in itself, and the choice of subjects always shows of what stuff a man is made. It is not desirable that the human intellect should possess such universality as to treat all subjects with equal talent and felicity; but even if the author does not succeed equally with them all, the mere attempt and desire to treat them give me a very high opinion of him. I consider it particularly remarkable and estimable that a practical, useful, and benevolent tendency prevails in all he does."

I had also brought him the first chapter of the "Travels to Paris," which I would have read to him, but which he preferred to study alone.

He then joked upon the difficulty of reading, and the presumption of many people, who, without any previous study and preparatory knowledge, would at

once read every philosophical and scientific work, as if it were nothing but a romance. "The good people," continued he, "know not what time and trouble it costs to *learn to read*. I have been employed for eighteen years on it, and cannot say that I have reached the goal yet."

(Sup.) Wednesday, January 27, 1830.

I dined very happily with Goethe. He spoke with great commendation of Herr von Martius. "His discovery of the spiral tendency," said he, "is of the highest importance. If I had anything more to desire in him, it would be that he should carry out his discovered primitive phenomenon (Urphänomenon) with decided boldness, and have the courage to announce a fact as a law, without too much seeking its confirmation at a distance."

He then showed me the transactions of the natural philosophical assembly at Heidelberg, with fac-similes of the handwriting printed on the back, which we observed, and formed our conclusions upon the character.

"I know very well," said Goethe, "that science does not derive so much benefit from these meetings as one might imagine, but they are excellent, inasmuch as people learn to know and esteem one another; whence it follows that a new doctrine of a distinguished man gains currency, and he in his turn becomes inclined to acknowledge and assist us in our tendencies of another department. Under every circumstance we see that something happens, and no one can tell what may come of it."

Goethe then showed me a letter from an English

author, with the address—To his Highness the Prince Goethe. “For this title I have probably to thank the German journalists,” said Goethe, laughing, “who, out of too great love, have named me the prince of German poets. And the consequence of the innocent German error, is the equally innocent English one.”

Goethe then returned to Herr von Martius, and praised him for possessing imagination. “In fact,” continued he, “a great natural philosopher without this high gift is impossible. I do not mean an imagination which goes into the vague and imagines things which do not exist; but I mean one which does not abandon the actual soil of the earth, and which steps to supposed and conjectured things by the standard of the real and the known. Then it may prove whether this or that supposition be possible, and whether it is not in contradiction with known laws. Such an imagination presupposes an enlarged tranquil mind, which has at its command a wide survey of the living world and its laws.”

Whilst we were speaking, a packet arrived containing a translation of “*Die Geschwister*” (the Brother and Sister) into Bohemian, which appeared to give Goethe great pleasure.

Sunday, January 31, 1830.

Dined with Goethe. We talked of Milton.

“I have lately,” said Goethe, “read his ‘*Samson*,’ which has more of the antique spirit than any production of any other modern poet. He is very great, and his own blindness enabled him to describe with so much truth the situation of Samson. Milton was really a poet; one to whom we owe all possible respect.”

The newspapers were brought in, and we saw in the Berlin theatrical intelligence that whales and sea-monsters had been introduced on the stage there.

Goethe read in the French paper "Le Temps," an article on the enormous revenue of the English clergy, which amounts to more than in all the rest of Christendom put together.

"It has been maintained," said Goethe, "that the world is governed by pay; this I know, that from pay we can find out whether it is well or ill governed."

(Sup.*) Sunday, January 31, 1830.

Paid a visit to Goethe, in company with the Prince. He received us in his work-room.

We spoke of the different editions of his works, when I was surprised to hear that he himself did not possess the greater part of these editions. He had not even the first edition of his "Roman Carnival," with engravings from his own original drawings. He had bid, he said, six dollars for it at an auction, but did not get it.

He then showed us the first manuscript of his "Götz von Berlichingen," quite in the original form, just as he had written it fifty years ago, in a few weeks, at the instigation of his sister. The fine strokes of the handwriting already bore completely the free clear character which his later German writing afterwards retained, and retains even now. The manuscript was very clear, whole pages could be read without the least correction, so that one would rather take it for a copy than the first rough draft.

Goethe wrote his earliest works, as he told us, with

his own hand, even his "Werther"; but the manuscript has been lost. In later times, on the contrary, he has dictated almost everything, and there are only poems and lightly noted sketches in his own hand. Very often he did not think of taking a copy of a new production; but frequently abandoned the most valuable works to chance, often sending the only copy he possessed to the printing-office at Stuttgart.

After we had sufficiently looked at the manuscript of "Götz von Berlichingen," Goethe showed us the original of his "Italian Journey." In these daily noted down observations and remarks, there are the same good qualities in the handwriting as in the "Götz." All is decided, firm, and sure; there are no corrections; and one sees that the details of his momentary notes were always fresh and clear in the mind of the writer. Nothing could have been changed for the better excepting the paper, which was different in form and colour in every town at which the traveller stopped.

Towards the end of the manuscript I found a spirited pen-and-ink drawing by Goethe, namely, the representation of an Italian advocate, holding a speech before the court in his robe of office. It was the most remarkable figure that one could imagine, and the dress was so striking, that one would have thought he had chosen it to go to a masquerade. And yet all was but a faithful copy of real life. With his forefinger upon the point of his thumb, and the rest of his fingers stretched out, the stout orator stood comfortably enough, and this slight movement was in perfect

accordance with the great perruque with which he had adorned himself.

Wednesday, February 3, 1830.

Dined with Goethe. We talked of Mozart.

"I saw him," said Goethe, "at seven years old, when he gave a concert while travelling our way. I myself was about fourteen years old, and remember perfectly the little man, with his frisure and sword."

I stared, for it seemed to me almost wonderful that Goethe was old enough to have seen Mozart when a child.

(Sup.*) Wednesday, February 3, 1830.

We spoke of the "Globe" and the "Temps," and this led to the French literature and literati.

"Guizot," said Goethe, amongst other things, "is a man after my own heart; he is solid. He possesses deep knowledge, combined with an enlightened liberality, which being above parties goes its own way. I am curious to see what part he will play in the Chamber, to which he has just been elected."

"People, who only appear to know him superficially," returned I, "have described him as somewhat pedantic."

"It remains to be known," answered Goethe, "with what sort of pedantry he is reproached. All distinguished men who, in their mode of life adopt a sort of regularity and firm principles, who have reflected much, and who do not trifle with the affairs of life, may very easily appear to be pedants in the eyes of superficial observers. Guizot is a far-seeing,

calm, constant man, who in the face of French fickleness cannot be sufficiently prized, and is exactly such a man as they want."

"Villemain," continued Goethe, "is perhaps more brilliant as an orator; he possesses the art of thoroughly developing a subject from its foundation; he is never at a loss for striking expressions with which to fix the attention of his hearers, and awaken them to loud applause; but he is far more superficial than Guizot, and far less practical.

"As for Cousin, he can indeed give little to us Germans, since the philosophy which he introduces to his countrymen as something new, has been known to us for years; but he is of great importance for the French. He will give them an entirely new tendency.

"Cuvier, the great naturalist, is admirable for his power of representation and his style. No one expounds a fact better than he; but he has scarcely any philosophy. He will bring up very well informed, but few profound scholars."

It was the more interesting to me to hear all this, as it accorded with Dumont's view of the persons in question. I promised Goethe to copy the passages relating to this subject from Dumont's manuscript, that he might compare them with his own opinion.

The mention of Dumont brought the conversation to the intimacy of Dumont with Bentham, on which subject Goethe expressed himself as follows:—

"It is an interesting problem for me," said he, "when I see that a rational and moderate man like Dumont could be the disciple and faithful worshipper of that madman Bentham."

“To a certain extent,” returned I, “Bentham is to be looked upon as a twofold person. I distinguish Bentham the genius—who discovered the principles which Dumont rescued from oblivion, by working them out—from Bentham the impassioned, who, through an exaggerated zeal for utility, overstepped the limits of his own doctrine, and thus became a radical both in politics and in religion.”

“That is a new problem for me,” returned Goethe, “that an old man can close the career of a long life, by becoming a radical in his last days.”

I endeavoured to solve this contradiction, by remarking that Bentham, being fully convinced of the excellence of his doctrine and his legislation, and of the impossibility of introducing them into England without an entire change in the system of Government, allowed himself to be carried away so much the more by his passionate zeal, as he came but little into contact with the outward world, and was unable to judge of the danger of violent overthrow.

“Dumont, on the contrary,” continued I, “who possesses more clearness and less passion, has never approved of Bentham’s exaggeration, and has been far removed from falling into a like fault himself. Besides, he has had the advantage of applying Bentham’s principles in a country which, in consequence of the political events of the times, might be regarded as new—namely, in Geneva, where everything perfectly succeeded, and the fortunate result proved the worth of the principle.”

“Dumont,” returned Goethe, “is a moderate

liberal, just as all rational people are and ought to be, and as I myself am. It is in this spirit I have endeavoured to act during a long life."

"The true liberal," he continued, "endeavours to effect as much good as he can, with the means which he has at command; but he would not extirpate evils, which are often inevitable, with fire and sword. He endeavours, by a judicious progress, gradually to remove glaring defects, without at the same time destroying an equal amount of good by violent measures. He contents himself in this ever imperfect world with what is good, until time and circumstances favour his attaining something better."

(Sup.) Saturday, February 6, 1830.

Dined with Frau von Goethe. Young Goethe related some pleasant anecdotes of his grandmother, "Frau Rath Goethe," of Frankfort, whom he had visited twenty years before as a student, and with whom he was one day invited to dine at the Prince Primate's. The Prince, as a mark of particular politeness, had come to meet the Frau Rath on the stairs; but as he wore his usual clerical costume, she took him for an Abbé, and paid him no particular respect. Even when first seated by his side at table, she did not put on the most friendly face. In the course of the conversation, however, she gradually perceived, from the deportment of the rest of the guests, that he was the Primate. The Prince then drank the health of her and her son, whereupon she rose and proposed the health of his highness.

Sunday, February 7, 1830.

Dined with Goethe. A great deal of conversation about the Prince Primate—that he had contrived to defend him by a skilful turn at the Empress of Austria's table ; the Prince's deficiency in philosophy ; his diletante love of painting, without taste ; the picture given to Miss Gore ; his goodness of heart and weak liberality, which at last brought him to poverty. Conversation on the nature of the "Desobligeant." After dinner young Goethe, with Walter and Wolf, appeared in his masquerade dress, in the character of Klingsohr, and then went to Court.

Wednesday, February 10, 1830.

Dined with Goethe. He spoke with real gratification of the poem written by Riemer, for the festival of the 2d February.

"All," added Goethe, "that Riemer does, is fit to be seen both by master and journeyman."

We talked also of the classic Walpurgis-night, and he said that he came to things which surprised even himself. The subject, too, had become more diffuse than he had expected.

"I am not half through it," said he, "but I will keep to it, and hope to have finished it by Easter. You shall see nothing more of it before, but, as soon as it is done, I will give it to you to take home, that you may examine it quietly. If you made up the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth volumes,* so that we might send off the last part at Easter, it would be a good arrangement, and we should have the summer

* That is, of Goethe's complete works.

open for something great. I would occupy myself with Faust, and endeavour to get over the fourth act."

I was pleased with this notion, and promised every assistance on my part.

Goethe then sent his servant to inquire after the Grand-Duchess Dowager, who had been very ill, and seemed to him in a dangerous situation.

"She should not have seen the masquerade," said he; "but princes are accustomed to have their own way, and thus all the protests of the Court and the physicians were in vain. With the same strong will with which she once confronted Napoleon, she now resists her bodily weakness; and can foresee already that she will go off, like the Grand-Duke, in the full vigour and mastery of her mind, although her body may have ceased to obey it."

Goethe appeared in low spirits, and remained silent for a while. Soon, however, we again conversed on cheerful subjects; and he told me of a book written in defence of Sir Hudson Lowe.

"It contains," he said, "most valuable traits, which can only have been derived from immediate eye-witnesses. You know that Napoleon ordinarily wore a dark-green uniform. It was at last so much worn and sun-burnt as entirely to lose its colour, and a necessity was felt of supplying its place with another. He wished for the same dark-green colour, but no article of the sort was to be found in the island. There was indeed a green cloth, but the colour was not pure, and ran into a yellowish tinge. The lord of the world found it intolerable to put such a colour on his body,

and nothing was left but to turn his old uniform, and wear it in that way.

“What do you say to that? Is it not a perfectly tragic trait? Is it not touching to see the master of kings so reduced at last that he must wear a turned uniform? And yet, when we reflect that such an end befell a man who had trampled under foot the life and happiness of millions, his fate appears after all very mild. Fate is here a Nemesis, who, in consideration of the hero's greatness, cannot avoid being a little generous. Napoleon affords us an example of the danger of elevating oneself to the Absolute, and sacrificing everything to the carrying out of an idea.”

We said a good deal more in reference to this subject, and I then went to the theatre to see the “Star of Seville.”

(Sup.*) Wednesday, February 10, 1830.

To-day, after dinner, I was for a moment with Goethe. He rejoiced at the approaching spring, and the increasing length of the days. We then spoke of the theory of colours. He appeared to doubt the possibility of opening a path for his simple theory. “The errors of my opponents,” said he, “have been too generally spread during a century for me to hope to find any companions on my solitary way. I shall remain alone! I often compare myself to a shipwrecked man, who has seized upon a plank which is only sufficient to bear one person. This one is saved, whilst all the rest are miserably drowned.

Sunday, February 14, 1830.

To-day, on my way to Goethe, who had invited me to dinner, I heard of the Grand-Duchess Dowager's

death, which had just happened. "What effect will this news have on Goethe at his advanced age?" was my first thought, and I entered the house with some apprehension. The servants said his daughter-in-law was gone to him to tell him the sad news.

"For more than fifty years," thought I, "he was attached to this princess, and blessed with her especial favour and friendship; her death must deeply move him."

With such feelings I entered his room, but was not a little surprised to find him in his usual cheerfulness and vigour, taking his soup with his daughter-in-law and grandchildren, as if nothing had happened.

We went on talking cheerfully of indifferent things. Presently all the bells began to toll; Frau von Goethe looked at me, and we talked louder, that the tone of the death-bells might not shock him; for we thought he felt like us. However, he did not feel like us; his mind was in a wholly different position. He sat before us, like a being of a higher order, inaccessible to earthly woes.

Hofrath Vogel was announced. He sat down, and told us all the circumstances of the last hours of the noble departed; to which Goethe listened with the same perfect calmness and composure. Vogel went away, and we continued our conversation at dinner on other subjects.

We talked a great deal about the "Chaos," and Goethe praised the "Reflections on Play," in the last number, as excellent. When Frau von Goethe retired with her children, I was left alone with Goethe.

He talked to me of his classic Walpurgis-night, saying he was getting forward in it every day, and effecting wonderful things, beyond his expectation.

He then showed me a letter which he had to-day received from the King of Bavaria, and which I read with great interest. The King's true and noble turn of mind was manifest in every line; and Goethe seemed much pleased by his remaining so constantly the same towards him.

Hofrath Soret was now announced, and joined us; he came with a message of condolence from her Imperial Highness to Goethe, which contributed to make him even more cheerful. He continued the conversation, and spoke of the celebrated Ninon de l'Enclos, who, in her sixteenth year, and in all her beauty, lay apparently on her deathbed, and with the most perfect composure comforted those who stood around it, saying, "What is it, after all? I leave mere mortals behind me!" However, she lived to the age of ninety; after having to her eightieth year made happy or desperate hundreds of lovers.

Goethe then talked of Gozzi, and his theatre at Venice, where the actors had merely subjects given them, and filled up the details impromptu. Gozzi said there were only six-and-thirty tragic situations. Schiller thought there were more, but could never succeed in finding even so many.

Then many interesting things were said about Grimm; his life and character, and his distrust of paper-money.

(Sup.*) Sunday, February 14, 1830.*

This was a day of mourning for Weimar; the Grand-Duchess Louise died this afternoon, at half-past

* This conversation, recorded by Soret, is the same as the preceding one recorded by Eckermann, but is given at greater length.—*Trans.*

one o'clock. The reigning Grand-Duchess ordered me to pay visits of condolence, in her name, to Fräulein von Waldner and Goethe.

I went first to Fräulein von Waldner. I found her in tears and deep affliction, quite abandoned to the feeling of her loss. "I was," said she, "for more than fifty years in the service of the late Princess. She herself chose me for her maid of honour. And this free choice on her side was my pride and my happiness. I forsook my native land to live in her service. Would she had now taken me with her, that I should not have so long to sigh for a reunion!"

I then went to Goethe. But how very different was his condition! He certainly did not feel the loss less deeply; but he appeared to be perfectly master of his own feelings. I found him sitting at dinner with a good friend, and drinking a bottle of wine. He spoke with animation, and appeared to be altogether in a very cheerful mood. "Well," said he, when he saw me, "come here, take your place. The blow which has long menaced us has at last fallen, and at least we have no longer to struggle with cruel uncertainty. We must now see how we can reconcile ourselves to life again."

"These are your comforters," said I, pointing to his papers. "Work is an excellent means of reviving our spirits under trials."

"As long as it is day," returned Goethe, "we can keep our heads up, and as long as we can produce we shall not fail."

He then spoke of persons who had attained a great age, and mentioned the renowned Ninon.

“Even in her ninetieth year,” said he, “she was young; but she understood how to maintain her equilibrium, and did not trouble herself with worldly affairs more than she ought. Death itself inspired her with no very great respect. When in her eighteenth * year she was afflicted with a severe illness, and the bystanders represented to her the danger she was in, she said quite calmly—‘What would it be after all? I should leave only mortals behind me!’ She lived seventy years after that, amiable and beloved, and enjoying all the pleasures of life; but with this peculiar equanimity constantly upholding herself above every consuming passion. Ninon knew what she was about; there are few who imitate her.”

He then handed me a letter from the King of Bavaria, which he had received to-day, and which probably contributed not a little to his cheerful humour. “Read,” said he, “and confess that the kindness which the King continually shows me, and the lively interest which he takes in the progress of literature and the higher human development, is calculated to give me pleasure. And I thank Heaven, as for a particular favour, that I have received this letter just on this day.”

We then spoke of the theatre, and dramatic poetry.

“Gozzi,” said Goethe, “would maintain that there are only six-and-thirty tragical situations. Schiller took the greatest pains to find more, but he did not find even so many as Gozzi.”

This led to an article in the “Globe,” viz., a critical exposition of the “Gustavus Vasa” of Arnault.

* “Sixteenth” in Eckermann’s narrative.—*Trans.*

The style and manner which the critic adopted, gave Goethe great pleasure, and received his perfect approbation. The judge has contented himself with mentioning all the reminiscences of the author, without further attacking him or his poetical principles.

“The critic of ‘*Le Temps*,’” added Goethe, “has not been so wise. He presumes to point out to the poet the way he should go. This is a great fault; for one cannot thus make him better. Generally, there is nothing more foolish than to say to a poet: ‘You should have done this in this way—and that in that. I speak from long experience. One can never make anything of a poet but what nature has intended him to be. If you force him to be another, you will destroy him. Now the gentlemen of the ‘*Globe*,’ as I said before, act very wisely. They print a long list of all the commonplaces which M. Arnault has picked up from every hole and corner; and by doing this they very cleverly point out the rock which the author has to avoid in future. It is almost impossible, in the present day, to find a situation which is thoroughly new. It is merely the manner of looking at it, and the art of treating and representing it, which can be new, and one must be the more cautious of every imitation.”

Goethe then related to us how Gozzi managed his “*Teatro del Arte*” in Venice, and how much his improvising troop was liked. “I have,” said he, “seen two actresses of that troop, particularly ‘*La Brighella*’; and I have seen several other improvised pieces of the sort. The effect produced by these people was extraordinary.”

Goethe then spoke of the Neapolitan "Pulcinella." "One of the chief jokes of this hero of low comedy," said he, "consisted in seeming sometimes to forget his part as an actor. He pretended to have returned home, talked familiarly with his family, told them about the piece in which he had acted, and of another in which he was about to act,—'But, my dear husband,' his wife would exclaim, 'you appear to forget the august company in whose presence you are.' 'E Vero! E Vero!' returned Pulcinella, recollecting himself; and then, amidst the applause of the spectators, he returned to his former part. The theatre of Pulcinella is in such repute, that no one in good society boasts of having been there. Ladies, as you may suppose, never go there at all; it is only frequented by men. Pulcinella is, in fact, a sort of living newspaper. Everything remarkable that has happened in Naples during the day may be heard from him in the evening. However, these local allusions, combined with his low popular dialect, make it almost impossible for foreigners to understand him."

Goethe turned the conversation to other reminiscences of his former days. He spoke of his small confidence in paper currency, and of the experiences he had had in this respect. By way of confirmation, he told us an anecdote of Grimm, about the time of the French Revolution, when thinking it no longer safe to remain in Paris, he returned to Germany, and lived at Gotha.

"We were one day dining at Grimm's," said Goethe. "I know not now how the conversation led to it, but Grimm said: 'I wager that no monarch

in Europe possesses so costly a pair of ruffles as I do ; and that no one has paid so high a price as I have. You may imagine that we loudly expressed incredulous astonishment, particularly the ladies, and that we were all very curious to see so wonderful a pair of ruffles. Grimm rose accordingly, and brought from his press a pair of lace ruffles, of such beauty, that we all burst into loud admiration. We endeavoured to set a price upon them, but still we could not value them more highly than at about a hundred or two hundred louis d'or. Grimm laughed and exclaimed : ‘ You are very far from the mark ; I paid twice a hundred and fifty thousand francs, and was lucky in laying out my assignats so well. The next day they were not worth a groschen.’ ”

(Sup.*) Monday, February 15, 1830.

I was this morning with Goethe for a moment, to inquire after his health in the name of the Grand-Duchess. I found him sad and thoughtful, without a trace of yesterday's rather violent excitement. He appeared to-day to feel deeply the chasm which death had made in a friendly intimacy of fifty years.

“ I must work very hard,” said he, “ to keep myself up, and to support myself under this sudden separation. Death is something so strange, that, notwithstanding all experience, one thinks it impossible for it to seize a beloved object ; and it always presents itself as something incredible and unexpected. It is, to a certain extent, an impossibility which suddenly becomes a reality. And this transition from an existence which we know, to another of which we know nothing,

is something so violent, that it cannot take place without the greatest shock to the survivors."

Wednesday, February 17, 1830.

We talked of the theatre—of the colour of the scenes and costumes. The result was as follows:—

Generally, the scenes should have a tone favourable to every colour of the dresses, like Beuther's scenery, which has more or less of a brownish tinge, and brings out the colour of the dresses with perfect freshness. If, however, the scene-painter is obliged to depart from so favourable an undecided tone, and to represent a red or yellow chamber, a white tent or a green garden, the actors should be clever enough to avoid similar colours in their dresses. If an actor in a red uniform and green breeches enters a red room, the upper part of his body vanishes, and only his legs are seen; if, with the same dress, he enters a green garden, his legs vanish, and the upper part of his body is conspicuous. Thus I saw an actor in a white uniform and dark breeches, the upper part of whose body completely vanished in a white tent, while the legs disappeared against a dark background.

"Even," said Goethe, "when the scene-painter is obliged to have a red or yellow chamber, or a green garden or wood, these colours should be somewhat faint and hazy, that every dress in the foreground may be relieved and produce the proper effect."

We talked about the *Iliad*, and Goethe called my attention to the following beautiful *motive*,—viz., that Achilles is put into a state of inaction for some time, that the other characters may appear and develop themselves.

Of his "Wahlverwandtschaften," he says, that there is not a touch in it which he had not experienced, and, at the same time, not a touch just as he had experienced it. He said the same thing of the Sesenheim story.*

After dinner we looked through a portfolio of the Netherland school. A view of a harbour, where on one side men are taking in fresh water, and on the other some are playing dice on a barrel, gave occasion to some fine remarks, as to how the real must be avoided, not to injure the effect of a work of art. The principal light falls on the top of the barrel; the dice are thrown, as may be seen by the gestures of the men, but they are not marked on the surface of the barrel, as they would have intercepted the light, and thus have marred the effect.

Ruysdael's studies for his Churchyard were then looked over, and we saw what pains even such a master had taken.

Sunday, February 21, 1830.

Dined with Goethe. He showed me the air-plant (*Luft-pflanze*), which I looked at with great interest. I remarked therein an effort to continue its existence as long as possible, before permitting its successor to manifest itself.

"I have determined," said Goethe, "to read neither the 'Temps' nor the 'Globe,' for a month to come. Things are in such a position, that some event of importance must happen within that time; I will wait till the news comes to me from without. My classical

* The story of Frederica in "Dichtung und Wahrheit."—*Trans.*

Walpurgis-night will gain from this abstinence; besides, one gets nothing from such interests—a consideration oftentimes left too much out of mind.”

He then showed me a letter, written by Boisserée, from Munich, which had given him great pleasure, and which I likewise read with delight. Boisserée spoke especially of the “Second Residence in Rome,” and on some points in the last number of “Kunst und Alterthum” (Art and Antiquity). His judgment showed equal good will and profundity; and we found an opportunity to talk much of the culture and activity of this valuable man.

Goethe then spoke of a new picture, by Cornelius, as being very fine in conception and execution; and the remark was made, that the real occasion for the good colouring of a picture lay in the composition.

Afterwards, during a walk, the air-plant came again into my mind, and I had the thought that a being goes on continuing its existence, and then collects itself to reproduce its like. This law of nature reminded me of the legend in which we conceive God living alone in the beginning of all things, and then creating the Son, who is like Himself. So, too, good masters find nothing more appropriate to do than to form good scholars, by whom their efforts and principles may be continued. Even so every work of a poet or artist must be looked upon as his *like*; if that is excellent, he who made it must also have been excellent. Thus no good work by another shall ever excite envy in me, since from its existence I must infer that of an excellent man worthy to produce it.

Wednesday, February 24, 1830.

Dined with Goethe. We talked of Homer. I remarked that the interposition of the gods immediately borders on the Real.

"That is infinitely delicate and human," said Goethe, "and I thank Heaven the times are gone by when the French called this interposition of the gods *machinery*. But really to learn to appreciate merits so vast required some time, for it demanded a complete regeneration of their culture."

He said he had given a new touch to the apparition of Helena, to enhance her beauty, which was suggested by a remark of mine, and did honour to my perceptions.

After dinner, Goethe showed me a sketch from a picture by Cornelius—Orpheus, before the throne of Pluto, supplicating for the release of Eurydice. The picture seemed to us well considered, and the details excellent; yet it did not quite satisfy or yield a genuine pleasure to the mind. Perhaps, we thought, the colouring may bring with it greater harmony, or perhaps the following moment, when Orpheus has conquered the heart of Pluto, and Eurydice is restored to him, would have been more favourable. The situation would not in that case have been so fraught with excitement and expectation, but would rather have given complete satisfaction.

Monday, March 1, 1830.

Dined at Goethe's, with Hofrath Voigt, of Jena. The conversation turned entirely on subjects of natural history, in which Hofrath Voigt displayed the most various and comprehensive knowledge.

Goethe mentioned that he had received a letter, containing this objection to his system,—that the cotyledons are not leaves, because they have no eyes behind them. But we satisfied ourselves, by examining various plants, that the cotyledons *have* eyes, as well as all the following leaves.

Voigt says that the *aperçu* of the “Metamorphosis of Plants” is one of the most fruitful discoveries which researches into natural history have given to modern times.

We spoke of collections of stuffed birds; and Goethe told us how an Englishman kept several hundreds of living birds in large cages. Some of these died, and he had them stuffed. The stuffed birds pleased him so well, that the thought occurred to him it would be better to kill them all, and have them stuffed; and this whim he at once carried into effect.

Voigt mentioned that he was about to translate Cuvier’s “Natural History,” and publish it, with some additions of his own.

After dinner, when Voigt had gone, Goethe showed me the manuscript of his “Walpurgis-nacht,” and I was astonished to see to what a bulk it had grown.

Wednesday, March 3, 1830.

Went to walk with Goethe before dinner. He spoke favourably of my poem on the King of Bavaria, observing that Lord Byron had had a favourable influence upon me, but that I still wanted what is called *convenance*, in which Voltaire was so great; and he recommended me to take him as my model.

At table we talked of Wieland, particularly of his

“Oberon”; and Goethe was of opinion that the foundation was weak, and that the plan had not been sufficiently thought over before the execution was begun. It was not well judged, he thought, to let a spirit procure the hairs and teeth, because the hero is thus left inactive. But the pregnant, graceful, ingenious treatment of this great poet, makes the book so attractive to the reader that he never thinks of the foundation, but reads on.

We continued talking on various subjects, till at last we came to the entelecheia.

“The obstinacy of the individual, and the fact that man shakes off what does not suit him,” said Goethe, “is a proof to me that something of the kind exists.”

I had for some minutes thought the same thing, and was about to express it, and hence I was doubly pleased to hear it uttered by Goethe.

“Leibnitz,” he continued, “had similar thoughts about independent beings, and indeed what we term an entelecheia, he called a monad.”

I determined to read further on the subject in Leibnitz.

(Sup.*) Friday, March 5, 1830.

A near relation of Goethe’s youthful love, Fräulein von Türkheim, had spent some time in Weimar. I expressed to Goethe to-day my regret at her departure. “She is so young,” said I, “and shows a lofty feeling, and a mature mind, such as one seldom finds at such an age. Besides, her appearance has made a great impression at Weimar. If she had remained longer, she might have become dangerous to many.”

“I am very sorry,” returned Goethe, “that I did

not see her oftener; and that I at first constantly delayed inviting her, in order that I might converse with her undisturbed, and retrace in her the beloved features of her relation."

"The fourth volume of '*Wahrheit und Dichtung*,'" continued he, "in which is related the youthful tale of happiness and woe relating to my love for Lili, has been finished for some time. I should have written and published it earlier, if I had not been restrained by certain delicate considerations—not on my own account, but on account of my beloved, who was then living. I should have been proud to proclaim to the world how much I loved her, and I think that she would not have blushed to confess that my affection was returned. But had I the right to publish this without her consent? It was always my intention to beg for it; but I delayed, until at last it was no longer necessary."

"Whilst you speak with such interest," continued Goethe, "of the amiable girl who has just left us, you awaken in me all my old recollections. I again see the charming Lili living before me; it is just as if I again felt the aspiration of her loved presence. She was, in fact, the first whom I deeply and truly loved. I may also say that she was the last; for all the little affections which I have felt, in the after part of my life, are, when compared with this first one, only light and superficial."

"I have never been so near a happiness after my own heart," continued Goethe, "as during the time of this love for Lili. The obstacles which separated us were not really insurmountable, and yet she was lost to me!

“ My affection for her had about it something so delicate, and something so peculiar, that even now, in the representation of that painfully happy epoch, it has an influence upon my style. When at some future time, you read the fourth volume of ‘ *Wahrheit und Dichtung*,’ you will find that this love is something very different from the love in novels.”

“ The same might be said,” returned I, “ of your love for Gretchen and Frederica. The description of both is so new and original, that novelists do not invent or imagine anything like it. This appears to proceed from the extreme veracity of the narrator, who has not endeavoured to cloak his experiences, in order to make them appear to greater advantage, and who has avoided every sentimental phrase, where the simple statement of the events is sufficient.

“ Besides, love itself,” continued I, “ is never alike ; it is always original, and always modifies itself according to the character and the personality of those whom we love.”

“ You are perfectly right,” returned Goethe, “ for not merely *we* are the love, but also the beloved object that charms us. And then—what we must not forget—we have as a powerful third element the Dæmonic (*dämonisch*) which accompanies every passion, and which finds its proper element in love. This was particularly active in my connection with Lili ; it gave another turn to my whole life, and I do not say too much when I assert that my coming to Weimar, and my presence here now, were immediate consequences of it.”

(Sup.*) Saturday, March 6, 1830.

Goethe had been reading, for some time, the "Memoirs of St. Simon."

"With the death of Louis the Fourteenth," said he to me some days ago, "I came to a stop. Until then the dozen volumes interested me to a high degree, through the contrast of the will of the master and the aristocratic virtue of the servant. But from the moment when that monarch takes his departure, and another personage enters, who is so bad that St. Simon himself appears to advantage by his side, I felt no more pleasure in reading; repugnance followed, and I left the book where the 'Tyrant' left me."

Goethe has also ceased, during the last fortnight, to read the "Globe" and the "Temps," which he had read for many months with the greatest ardour. Now, when the numbers arrive folded up, he lays them aside unopened. However, he begs his friends to tell him what is going on in the world. He has been for some time very productive, and quite buried in the second part of his "Faust." It is the classical "Walpurgis-nacht" which has especially absorbed him for some weeks, and which is therefore making rapid and striking progress. In such thoroughly productive epochs Goethe does not like reading, unless, as something light and cheerful, it affords him a healthy repose, or stands in harmony and assists him with the subject he has immediately in hand. He avoids it, on the contrary, when it has so strong and exciting an effect as to disturb his quiet and calm production, and dissipate and distract his active interest. The last appears to have been the case with the "Globe" and the "Temps."

"I see," said he, "that important events are about to take place in Paris; we are on the eve of a great explosion. But since I have no influence upon it, I shall wait for it quietly, without allowing myself to be unnecessarily excited every day by the interesting progress of the drama. I now read neither the 'Globe' nor the 'Temps,' and my 'Walpurgis-nacht' progresses the better for it."

He spoke of the state of the most modern French literature, which interests him much.

"What the French," said he, "in their present literary tendency, consider something new, is in fact nothing but the reflection of what the German literature has intended, and has been for fifty years. The germ of the historical pieces which are now new to them, is to be found in my 'Götz,' written half a century ago.

"Besides," continued he, "the German authors have never thought, and have never written with the view of exerting an influence over the French. I myself have always had only Germany before my eyes, and it was only yesterday or the day before that it occurred to me to turn my glances westward, to see what our neighbours think of me on the other side of the Rhine. And even now they have no influence over my productions. Wieland himself, who imitated the French forms and manner, always remained a German at bottom, and would make a bad figure in a translation."

Sunday, March 7, 1830.

Went to Goethe about twelve, and found him remarkably fresh and strong. He told me that he had

been forced to lay aside the classical Walpurgis-night, to finish the last number.*

“I have shown my wisdom,” said he, “in leaving off when I was in a good vein, and had much to say that I had already invented. In this way, it is much easier to resume my subject, than if I had gone on writing till I came to a stand-still.”

I noted down this as good doctrine. We had intended to take a walk before dinner, but we both found it so pleasant in the room that the horses were countermanded.

In the mean while, Frederic, the servant, had unpacked a large chest, which had arrived from Paris. It was a present from the sculptor David, of bas-relief portraits in plaster of fifty-seven celebrated persons. Frederic brought in the casts in the different drawers, and we were much amused in looking at all the persons of distinction. I was particularly curious about Merimée; the head appeared as powerful and bold as his talent, and Goethe remarked that he had something humorous about him. Victor Hugo, Alfred de Vigny, Emile Deschamps, appeared with clear, free, cheerful faces. We were also pleased to see Mademoiselle Gay, Madame Tastu, and other young female writers. The powerful head of Fabvier reminded us of the men of earlier ages; we felt delight in looking at it again and again.

Thus we went on from one eminent person to another, and Goethe could not help saying repeatedly that through this present from David he possessed a treasure for which he could not sufficiently thank the

* Of his entire works.—*Trans.*

admirable artist. He would not fail to show this collection to travellers, and in that way attain verbal information about some of those personages who were unknown to him.

Some books had also been packed up in the chest, which he had ordered to be taken into the front rooms, whither we followed them and sat down to dine. We were in good spirits, and spoke of works and plans of works.

“It is not good for man to be alone,” said Goethe, “and especially to work alone. On the contrary, he needs sympathy and suggestion to do anything well. I owe to Schiller the ‘Achilleis,’ and many of my ballads, to which he urged me; and you may take the credit to yourself, if I complete the second part of ‘Faust.’ I have often told you so before, but I must repeat it, that you may know it.”

These words rejoiced me, for I felt that there might be much truth in what he said. After dinner, Goethe opened one of the packets. This contained the poems of Emile Deschamps, accompanied by a letter, which Goethe gave me to read. I saw with delight what influence was attributed to Goethe over the new life of French literature, and how the young poets loved and revered him as their intellectual head. Thus had Shakspeare worked upon the youth of Goethe. It could not be said of Voltaire, that he had had an influence of the kind on the young poets of other countries, that they assembled in his spirit, and recognised him as their lord and master. The letter of Deschamps was written altogether with a very amiable cordiality and freedom.

"You see there the spring-time of a beautiful mind," said Goethe.

We found also a leaf, which David had sent with drawings of Napoleon's hat in various positions.

"That is something for my son," said Goethe, and sent him the leaf immediately. It produced its effect, for young Goethe soon came down full of glee, and declared that these hats of his hero were the *ne plus ultra* of his collection. Five minutes had not passed before the leaf, under glass and in a frame, was in its place among other attributes and monuments of the hero.

(Sup.) Sunday, March 14, 1830.

This evening at Goethe's. He showed me all the treasures, now put in order, from the chest which he had received from David, and with the unpacking of which I had found him occupied some days ago. The plaster medallions, with the profiles of the principal young poets of France, he had laid in order side by side upon tables. On this occasion, he spoke once more of the extraordinary talent of David, which was as great in conception as in execution. He also showed me a number of the newest works, which had been presented to him, through the medium of David, as gifts from the most distinguished talents of the romantic school. I saw works by St. Beuve, Ballanche, Victor Hugo, Balzac, Alfred de Vigny, Jules Janin, and others.

"David," said he, "has prepared happy days for me, by this present. The young poets have already occupied me the whole week, and afford me new life by the fresh impressions which I receive from them. I

shall make a separate catalogue of these much esteemed portraits and books, and shall give them both a special place in my collection of works of art and my library."

One could see from Goethe's manner that this homage from the young poets of France afforded him the heartiest delight.

He then read something from the "Studies," by Emile Deschamps. He praised the translation of the "Bride of Corinth," as faithful, and very successful.

"I possess," said he, "the manuscript of an Italian translation of this poem, which gives the original, even to the rhymes."

"The Bride of Corinth" induced Goethe to speak of the rest of his ballads. "I owe them, in a great measure, to Schiller," said he, "who impelled me to them, because he always wanted something new for his 'Horen.' I had already carried them in my head for many years; they occupied my mind as pleasant images, as beautiful dreams, which came and went, and by playing with which my fancy made me happy. I unwillingly resolved to bid farewell to these brilliant visions, which had so long been my solace, by embodying them in poor, inadequate words. When I saw them on paper, I regarded them with a mixture of sadness. I felt as if I were about to be separated for ever from a beloved friend.

"At other times," continued Goethe, "it has been totally different with my poems. They have been preceded by no impressions or forebodings, but have come suddenly upon me, and have insisted on being composed immediately, so that I have felt an instinctive and dreamy impulse to write them down on the

spot. In such a somnambulistic condition, it has often happened that I have had a sheet of paper lying before me all on one side, and I have not discovered it till all has been written, or I have found no room to write any more. I have possessed many such sheets written crossways, but they have been lost one after another, and I regret that I can no longer show any proofs of such poetic abstraction."

The conversation then returned to the French literature, and the modern ultra-romantic tendency of some not unimportant talents. Goethe was of opinion that this poetic revolution, which was still in its infancy, would be very favourable to literature, but very prejudicial to the individual authors who effect it.

"Extremes are never to be avoided in any revolution," said he. "In a political one, nothing is generally desired in the beginning but the abolition of abuses; but before people are aware, they are deep in bloodshed and horrors. Thus the French, in their present literary revolution, desired nothing at first but a freer form; however, they will not stop there, but will reject the traditional contents together with the form. They begin to declare the representation of noble sentiments and deeds as tedious, and attempt to treat of all sorts of abominations. Instead of the beautiful subjects from Grecian mythology, there are devils, witches, and vampyres, and the lofty heroes of antiquity must give place to jugglers and galley slaves. This is piquant! This is effective! But after the public has once tasted this highly seasoned food, and has become accustomed to it, it will always long for more, and that stronger. A young man of talent,

who would produce an effect and be acknowledged, and who is great enough to go his own way, must accommodate himself to the taste of the day—nay, must seek to outdo his predecessors in the horrible and frightful. But in this chase after outward means of effect, all profound study, and all gradual and thorough development of the talent and the man from within, is entirely neglected. And this is the greatest injury which can befall a talent, although literature in general will gain by this tendency of the moment.

“But,” added I, “how can an attempt which destroys individual talents be favourable to literature in general?”

“The extremes and excrescences which I have described,” returned Goethe, “will gradually disappear; but at last this great advantage will remain—besides a freer form, richer and more diversified subjects will have been attained, and no object of the broadest world and the most manifold life will be any longer excluded as unpoetical. I compare the present literary epoch to a state of violent fever, which is not in itself good and desirable, but of which improved health is the happy consequence. That abomination which now often constitutes the whole subject of a poetical work, will in future only appear as an useful expedient; ay, the pure and the noble, which is now abandoned for the moment, will soon be resought with additional ardour.”

“It is surprising to me,” remarked I, “that even *Merimée*, who is one of your favourites, has entered upon this ultra-romantic path, through the horrible subjects of his ‘*Guzla*.’

“Merimée,” returned Goethe, “has treated these things very differently from his fellow-authors. These poems certainly are not deficient in various horrible *motives*, such as churchyards, nightly crossways, ghosts and vampires; but the repulsive themes do not touch the intrinsic merit of the poet. On the contrary, he treats them from a certain objective distance, and, as it were, with irony. He goes to work with them like an artist, to whom it is an amusement to try anything of the sort. He has, as I have said before, quite renounced himself, nay, he has even renounced the Frenchman, and that to such a degree, that at first these poems of Guzla were deemed real Illyrian popular poems, and thus little was wanting for the success of the imposition he had intended.

“Merimée,” continued Goethe, “is indeed a thorough fellow! Indeed, generally, more power and genius are required for the objective treatment of a subject than is supposed. Thus, too, Lord Byron, notwithstanding his predominant personality, has sometimes had the power of renouncing himself altogether, as may be seen in some of his dramatic pieces, particularly in his ‘Marino Faliero.’ In this piece one quite forgets that Lord Byron, or even an Englishman, wrote it. We live entirely in Venice, and entirely in the time in which the action takes place. The personages speak quite from themselves, and from their own condition, without having any of the subjective feelings, thoughts, and opinions of the poet. That is as it should be. Of our young French romantic writers of the exaggerating sort, one cannot say as much. What I have read of them—poems, novels,

dramatic works—have all borne the personal colouring of the author, and none of them ever make me forget that a Parisian—that a Frenchman—wrote them. Even in the treatment of foreign subjects one still remains in France and Paris, quite absorbed in all the wishes, necessities, conflicts, and fermentations of the present day.”

“Béranger also,” I threw in experimentally, “has only expressed the situation of the great metropolis, and his own interior.”

“That is a man,” said Goethe, “whose power of representation and whose interior are worth something. In him is all the substance of an important personality. Béranger is a nature most happily endowed, firmly grounded in himself, purely developed from himself, and quite in harmony with himself. He has never asked—what would suit the times? what produces an effect? what pleases? what are others doing?—in order that he might do the like. He has always worked only from the core of his own nature, without troubling himself as to what the public, or what this or that party expects. He has certainly, at different critical epochs, been influenced by the mood, wishes, and necessities of the people; but that has only confirmed him in himself, by proving to him that his own nature is in harmony with that of the people; and has never seduced him into expressing anything but what already lay in his heart.”

“You know that I am; upon the whole, no friend to what is called political poems, but such as Béranger has composed I can tolerate. With him there is nothing snatched out of the air, nothing of merely

imagined or imaginary interest ; he never shoots at random ; but, on the contrary, has always the most decided, the most important subjects. His affectionate admiration of Napoleon, and his reminiscences of the great warlike deeds which were performed under him, and that at a time when these recollections were a consolation to the somewhat oppressed French ; then his hatred of the domination of priests, and of the darkness which threatened to return with the Jesuits : these are things to which one cannot refuse hearty sympathy. And how masterly is his treatment on all occasions ! How he turns about and rounds off every subject in his own mind before he expresses it ! And then, when all is matured, what wit, spirit, irony, and persiflage, and what heartiness, naïveté, and grace, are unfolded at every step ! His songs have every year made millions of joyous men ; they always flow glibly from the tongue, even with the working-classes, whilst they are so far elevated above the level of the commonplace, that the populace, in converse with these pleasant spirits, becomes accustomed and compelled to think itself better and nobler. What more would you have ? and, altogether, what higher praise could be given to a poet ?”

“He is excellent, unquestionably !” returned I. “You know how I have loved him for years, and can imagine how it gratifies me to hear you speak of him thus. But if I must say which of his songs I prefer, his amatory poems please me more than his political, in which the particular references and allusions are not always clear to me.”

“That happens to be your case,” returned Goethe ;

“ the political poems were not written for you : but ask the French, and they will tell you what is good in them. Besides, a political poem, under the most fortunate circumstances, is to be looked upon only as the organ of a single nation, and in most cases only as the organ of a single party ; but it is seized with enthusiasm by this nation and this party when it is good. Again, a political poem should always be looked upon as the mere result of a certain state of the times ; which passes by, and with respect to succeeding times takes from the poem the value which it derived from the subject. As for Béranger, his was no hard task. Paris is France. All the important interests of his great country are concentrated in the capital, and there have their proper life and their proper echo. Besides, in most of his political songs he is by no means to be regarded as the mere organ of a single party ; on the contrary, the things against which he writes are for the most part of so universal and national an interest, that the poet is almost always heard as a great *voice* of the people. With us, in Germany, such a thing is not possible. We have no city, nay we have no country, of which we could decidedly say—*here is Germany !* If we inquire in Vienna, the answer is—this is Austria ! and if in Berlin, the answer is—this is Prussia ! Only sixteen years ago, when we tried to get rid of the French, was Germany everywhere. Then a political poet could have had an universal effect ; but there was no need of one ! The universal necessity, and the universal feeling of disgrace, had seized upon the nation like something dæmonic ; the inspiring fire which the poet might have kindled was

already burning everywhere of its own accord. Still, I will not deny that Arndt, Körner, and Rückert, have had some effect."

"You have been reproached," remarked I, rather inconsiderately, "for not taking up arms at that great period, or at least co-operating as a poet."

"Let us leave that point alone, my good friend," returned Goethe. "It is an absurd world, which does not know what it wants, and which one must allow to have its own way. How could I take up arms without hatred, and how could I hate without youth? If such an emergency had befallen me when twenty years old, I should certainly not have been the last; but it found me as one who had already passed the first sixties.

"Besides, we cannot all serve our country in the same way, but each does his best, according as God has endowed him. I have toiled hard enough during half a century. I can say, that in those things which nature has appointed for my daily work, I have permitted myself no repose or relaxation night or day, but have always striven, investigated, and done as much, and that as well, as I could. If every one can say the same of himself, it will prove well with all."

"The fact is," said I, by way of conciliation, "that you should not be vexed at that reproach, but should rather feel flattered at it. For what does it show, but that the opinion of the world concerning you is so great, that it desires that he who has done more for the culture of his nation than any other, should at last do everything!"

"I will not say what I think," returned Goethe. "There is more ill-will towards me, hidden beneath

that remark than you are aware of. I feel therein a new form of the old hatred with which people have persecuted me, and endeavoured quietly to wound me for years. I know very well that I am an eyesore to many; that they would all willingly get rid of me; and that, since they cannot touch my talent, they aim at my character. Now, it is said, I am proud; now, egotistical; now, full of envy towards young talents; now, immersed in sensuality; now, without christianity; and now, without love for my native country, and my own dear Germans. You have now known me sufficiently for years, and you feel what all that talk is worth. But if you would learn what I have suffered, read my 'Xenien,' and it will be clear to you, from my retorts, how people have from time to time sought to embitter my life.

"A German author is a German martyr! Yes, my friend, you will not find it otherwise! And I myself can scarcely complain; none of the others have fared better—most have fared worse; and in England and France it is quite the same as with us. What did not Molière suffer? What Rousseau and Voltaire? Byron was driven from England by evil tongues; and would have fled to the end of the world, if an early death had not delivered him from the Philistines and their hatred.

"And if it were only the narrow-minded masses that persecuted noble men! But no! one gifted man and one talent persecutes another; Platen scandalizes Heine, and Heine Platen, and each seeks to make the other hateful; while the world is wide enough for all to live and to let live; and every one has

an enemy in his own talent, who gives him quite enough to do.

“To write military songs, and sit in a room! That forsooth was my duty! To have written them in the bivouac, when the horses at the enemy’s outposts are heard neighing at night, would have been well enough; however, that was not my life and not my business, but that of Theodore Körner. His war-songs suit him perfectly. But to me, who am not of a warlike nature, and who have no warlike sense, war-songs would have been a mask which would have fitted my face very badly.

“I have never affected anything in my poetry. I have never uttered anything which I have not experienced, and which has not urged me to production. I have only composed love-songs when I have loved. How could I write songs of hatred without hating! And, between ourselves, I did not hate the French, although I thanked God that we were free from them. How could I, to whom culture and barbarism are alone of importance, hate a nation which is among the most cultivated of the earth, and to which I owe so great a part of my own cultivation?

“Altogether,” continued Goethe, “national hatred is something peculiar. You will always find it strongest and most violent where there is the lowest degree of culture. But there is a degree where it vanishes altogether, and where one stands to a certain extent *above* nations, and feels the weal or woe of a neighbouring people, as if it had happened to one’s own. This degree of culture was conformable to my nature, and I had become strengthened in it long before I had reached my sixtieth year.”

(Sup.) Monday, March 15, 1830.

This evening, passed a short hour at Goethe's. He spoke a great deal of Jena, and of the arrangements and improvements which he had made in the different branches of the University. For chemistry, botany, and mineralogy, which had formerly been treated only so far as they belonged to pharmacy, he had introduced especial chairs. Above all, he had done much good for the museum of natural history and the library. On this occasion he again related to me, with much self-satisfaction and good humour, the history of his violent occupation of a room adjoining the library, of which the medical faculty had taken possession, and which they would not give up.

"The library," said he, "was in very bad condition. The situation was damp and close, and by no means fit to contain its treasures in a proper manner; particularly as by the purchase of the Büttner library, on the part of the Grand-Duke, an addition had been made of 13,000 volumes, which lay in large heaps upon the floor, because, as I have said, there was no room to place them properly. I was really in some distress on that account. An addition should have been made to the building, but for this the means were wanting; and, besides, this addition could easily be avoided, since adjoining the library there was a large room which was standing empty, and which was quite calculated to supply all our necessities most admirably. However, this room was not in possession of the library, but was used by the medical faculty, who sometimes employed it for their conferences. I therefore

applied to these gentlemen, with this very civil request,—that they would give up this room to me for the library. To this the gentlemen would not agree. They were willing, they said, to give it up if I would have a new room built for their conferences, and that immediately. I replied that I should be very ready to have another place prepared for them, but that I could not promise them a new building immediately. This answer did not appear to have satisfied the gentlemen ; for when I sent the next morning for the key, I was told that it could not be found !

“ There now remained no other course but to enter as a conqueror. I therefore sent for a bricklayer, and took him into the library, before the wall of the said adjoining room. ‘ This wall, my friend,’ said I, ‘ must be very thick, for it separates two different parts of the dwelling : just try how strong it is.’ The bricklayer went to work, and scarcely had he given five or six hearty blows, when bricks and mortar fell in, and one could see, through the opening, some venerable perukes, with which the room had been decorated. ‘ Go on, my friend,’ said I ; ‘ I cannot yet see clearly enough. Do not restrain yourself, but act just as if you were in your own house.’ This friendly encouragement so animated the bricklayer, that the opening was soon large enough to serve perfectly for a door ; when my library attendants rushed into the room each with an armful of books, which they threw upon the ground as a sign of possession.

“ Benches, chairs, and desks vanished in a moment ; and my assistants were so quick and active, that in a few days all the books were arranged in the most

beautiful order along the walls of their repository. The doctors, who soon afterwards entered their room, *in corpore*, through their usual door, were quite confounded to find so great and unexpected a change. They did not know what to say, and retired in silence ; but they all harboured a secret grudge against me. Still, when I see them singly, and particularly when I have any one of them to dine with me, they are quite charming, and my very dear friends. When I related to the Grand-Duke the course of this adventure, which was certainly achieved with his consent and perfect approbation, it amused him right royally, and we have very often laughed at it since."

Goethe was in a very good humour, and happy in these reminiscences.

" Yes, my friend," continued he, " we had our share of trouble in doing good. Afterwards, when, on account of the great dampness in the library, I wished to take down and remove the whole of the old city-wall, which was quite useless, I found no better success. My entreaties, good reasons, and rational representations, found no hearing, and I was obliged, at last, here also to go to work as a conqueror. When the city authorities saw my workmen at work upon their old wall, they sent a deputation to the Grand-Duke, who was then at Domburg, with the humble request that his highness would be pleased, by a word of command, to check my violent destruction of their venerable old city-wall. But the Grand-Duke, who had secretly authorized me to take this step, answered very wisely,—' I do not intermeddle with Goethe's affairs. He knows what he has to do, and must act

as he thinks right. Go to him, and speak to him yourself, if you have the courage !'

"However, no one made his appearance at my house," continued Goethe laughing; "I went on pulling down as much of the old wall as was in my way, and had the happiness of seeing my library dry at last."

Tuesday, March 16, 1830.

This morning Herr von Goethe paid me a visit, and informed me that his long contemplated tour to Italy had been decided on; that his father had allowed the necessary money; and that he wished me to accompany him. We were both highly pleased, and talked a great deal about our preparations.

When I passed Goethe's house at noon, Goethe beckoned me at the window, and I hastened up to him. He was in the front apartments, and seemed very fresh and cheerful. He began to talk about his son's tour, saying that he approved of it, thought it very rational, and was glad that I would accompany him.

"It will be a good thing for you both," said he, "and your cultivation in particular will receive no small advantage."

He then showed me a Christ with twelve Apostles, and we talked of the poverty of these forms as subjects for sculpture.

"One Apostle," said Goethe, "is always much like another, and very few have enough life and action connected with them to give them character and significance. I have on this occasion amused myself with making a cycle of twelve biblical figures, in which every one is significant and distinct from the

rest, and therefore every one is a grateful subject for the artist.

“First comes Adam—the most beautiful of men, as perfect as can be imagined. He may have his hand upon a spade, as a symbol that man is called to till the earth.

“Next Noah, with whom a new creation begins. He cultivates the vine, and therefore this figure may have something of the character of the Indian Bacchus.

“Next Moses, as the first lawgiver.

“Then David, as warrior and king.

“Next to him, Isaiah as prince and prophet.

“Then Daniel, who points to the *future* Christ.

“Christ.

“Next to him John, who loves the *present* Christ. Thus Christ would be placed between two youthful figures, one of whom, viz. Daniel, should be painted with a mild expression and long hair, while the other should be impassioned and with short curly hair. But who shall come after John?

“The Captain of Capernaum, as a representation of the faithful, who expect immediate aid.

“Then the Magdalen, as a symbol of penitent man urging forgiveness and eager for reformation. In these two figures the idea of Christianity would be contained.

“Then Paul may follow, who most vigorously propagated the new doctrine.

“After him James, who went to the remotest nations, and represents missionaries.

“Peter would conclude the whole. The artist should place him near the door, and give him an

expression as if he examined those who entered, in order to see whether they were worthy to tread the sanctuary.

“What do you say to this cycle? I think it would be richer than that of the twelve Apostles, where all look like each other. Moses and the Magdalen I would represent sitting.”

I was very pleased to hear all this, and requested Goethe to write it down, which he promised to do. “I will think it over again,” he said, “and then give it with other new things for the thirty-ninth volume.”

Wednesday, March 17, 1830.

Dined with Goethe. I asked him respecting a passage in his poems, whether it should be read,—“As thy priest Horace in his rapture promised,” as it stands in all the older editions,—or, “As thy priest Propertius,” &c., as it stands in the new edition.

“I allowed myself,” said Goethe, “to be seduced by Götting into this last reading. ‘Priest Propertius’ sounds badly, and therefore I am for the earlier reading.”

“Thus, too,” said I, “it stood in the manuscript of your ‘Helena,’ that Theseus carries her off as a slim roe of *ten* years. In consequence of Götting’s suggestions, you have printed—‘a slim roe of *seven* years,’ which is too young both for the beautiful girl herself, and for the twin-brothers Castor and Pollux, who rescue her. The whole story lies so completely in the fabulous ages, that no one can tell how old she really was; and, besides, mythology altogether is so pliant, that we may use things just as we find most convenient.”

“You are right,” said Goethe; “I also am in favour of her being ten years old when Theseus carries her off, and hence I have written afterwards,—‘From her *tenth* year she has been good for nought.’ In the future edition you may again make the roe of seven years into one of ten.”

After dinner Goethe showed me two new numbers by Neureuther, after his ballads, and we admired above everything the free cheerful mind of this amiable artist.

(Sup.*) Wednesday, March 17, 1830.

This evening at Goethe's for a couple of hours. By order of the Grand-Duchess I brought him back “Gemma von Art,” and told him the good opinion I entertained of this piece.

“I am always glad,” returned he, “when anything is produced which is new in invention, and bears the stamp of talent.” Then, taking the volume between his hands, and looking at it somewhat askance, he added, “but I am never quite pleased when I see a dramatic author make pieces too long to be represented as they are written. This imperfection takes away half the pleasure that I should otherwise feel. Only see what a thick volume this ‘Gemma von Art’ is.”

“Schiller,” returned I, “has not managed much better, and yet he is a very great dramatic author.”

“He too has certainly committed this fault,” returned Goethe. “His first pieces particularly, which he wrote in the fulness of youth, seem as if they would never end. He had too much on his heart, and too much to say to be able to control it. Afterwards, when he became conscious of this fault, he

took infinite trouble, and endeavoured to overcome it by work and study ; but he never perfectly succeeded. It really requires a poetical giant, and is more difficult than is imagined, to control a subject properly, to keep it from overpowering one, and to concentrate one's attention on that alone which is absolutely necessary."

Hofrath Riemer was announced, and entered. I prepared to depart, as I knew that this was the evening on which Goethe was accustomed to work with Riemer. But Goethe begged me to remain, which I did very willingly, and thus became a witness of a conversation full of recklessness, irony, and Mephistophilistic humour on Goethe's part.*

"So Sömmering is dead," began Goethe, "and scarcely seventy-five wretched years old. What blockheads men are, that they have not the courage to last longer than that! There I praise my friend Bentham, that extremely radical madman; he keeps himself well, and yet he is some weeks older than I am."

"It might be added," returned I, "that he equals you in one other point, for he still works with all the activity of youth."

"That may be," returned Goethe; "but we are at opposite ends of the chain: he wishes to pull down, and I wish to support and build up. To be such a radical, at his age, is the height of all madness."

"I think," rejoined I, "we should distinguish between two kinds of radicalism. The one to build up

* Some passages which border on the profane are purposely omitted in this conversation.—*Trans.*

for the future will first make a clean path by pulling down everything ; whilst the other is contented to point out the weak parts and the faults of an administration, in hopes of attaining good without the aid of violent measures. If you had been born in England, you would not certainly have avoided belonging to this last class."

"What do you take me for?" returned Goethe, who now adopted the mien and tone of his Mephistophiles. "I forsooth should have searched out abuses, and detected and published them into the bargain? I who in England should have lived upon abuses? If I had been born in England, I should have been a rich Duke, or rather a Bishop with 30,000*l.* a year."

"Very good," returned I; "but if, by chance, you had not drawn the great prize, but a blank? there are so many blanks."

"It is not every one, my dear friend," returned Goethe, "who is made for the great prize. Do you believe that I should have committed the folly of lighting on a blank? I should, above all things, have taken the part of the Thirty-Nine Articles; I should have advocated them on all sides, and in all directions—particularly the Ninth Article, which would have been for me an object of special attention and tender devotion. I would have played the hypocrite, and lied so well and so long, both in rhyme and prose, that my 30,000*l.* a year should not have escaped me. And then, having once attained this eminence, I would have neglected nothing to keep my position. Above all, I would have done everything to make the night of ignorance if possible still darker. Oh, how would I

have tried to cajole the good, silly multitude; and how would I have humbled the schoolboys, so that no one should have observed, or even have had the courage to remark that my brilliant position was based upon the most scandalous abuses."

"With you," answered I, "people would at least have had the consolation of thinking that you had attained such eminence by means of eminent talent. But in England, the most stupid and incapable people are often those who are in enjoyment of the highest worldly prosperity, for which they have to thank not their own deserts, but patronage, chance—and, above all, birth."

"It is the same in the end," returned Goethe, "whether one attains brilliant worldly prosperity through one's own exertions, or through inheritance. The first possessors were still, in every case, people of genius, who turned to their own account the ignorance and weakness of others. The world is so full of simpletons and madmen, that one need not seek them in a madhouse. This reminds me that the late Grand-Duke, who knew my objection to madhouses, once endeavoured to take me into one by a sudden stratagem. However, I smelt the rat in time, and told him that I felt no necessity to see the madmen who were in confinement, as I had already seen enough of those who went about at liberty. 'I am very ready,' said I, 'to follow your Highness anywhere, with the sole exception of a madhouse.' * * *

"By the way, I have already made a trial in the religious style. As a boy of sixteen, I wrote a dithyrambic poem upon the Descent into hell, which

has been printed but not acknowledged, and which has but lately fallen into my hands again. You know it, Riemer?"

"No, your excellency," returned Riemer, "I do not know it. But I recollect that, in the first year after my arrival, you were seriously ill, and that in a state of delirium you recited the most beautiful verses on that subject. These were, doubtless, recollections of that poem of your early youth."

"That is very probable," said Goethe. "I knew a case in which an old man of low condition, who lay at the last gasp, quite unexpectedly recited the most beautiful Greek sentences. People were perfectly convinced that the man did not understand a word of Greek, and there was no end to their astonishment; the cunning had already begun to derive advantage from the credulity of the fools, when it was unfortunately discovered that the old man in his early youth had been obliged to learn all sorts of Greek sentences by heart, in the presence of a boy of high family, whom his example, it was hoped, would incite. He had learned truly classical Greek quite mechanically, without understanding it, and had not thought of it again for fifty years, until, in his last illness, this lumber of words with which he was crammed began to revive."

* * * * *

Conversation now turned upon romances and plays, and their moralizing or demoralizing effect upon the public.

"It must be bad indeed," said Goethe, "if a book has a more demoralizing effect than life itself, which

daily displays the most scandalous scenes in abundance, if not before our eyes, at least before our ears. Even with children, people need by no means be so anxious about the effect of a book or a play. Daily life is, as I said before, more instructive than the most effective book."

"But still," remarked I, "with respect to children people take care not to utter things in their presence which are considered improper for them to hear."

"That is laudable enough," said Goethe, "and I do the same myself, but I consider the precaution quite useless. Children, like dogs, have so sharp and fine a scent, that they detect and hunt out everything—the bad before all the rest. They also know well enough how this or that friend stands with their parents; and as they practise no dissimulation whatever, they serve as excellent barometers by which to observe the degree of favour or disfavour at which we stand with their parents.

Some one had once spoken ill of me in company; and, indeed, the circumstance appeared to me of such importance, that I wished much to discover whence the blow came. People here were generally well disposed towards me. I turned my thoughts in every direction, and could not make out with whom the odious report had originated. All of a sudden a light dawned upon me. I one day met, in the street, some little boys of my acquaintance, who did not greet me as they had been accustomed. This was enough for me, and upon this track I very soon discovered that it was their beloved parents who had set their tongues wagging, at my cost, in so shameful a manner."

Sunday, March 21, 1830.

Dined with Goethe. He spoke first about his son's journey, saying, that we ought not to form too great expectations as to the result.

"People usually come back as they have gone away," said he; "indeed, we must take care not to return with thoughts which do not fit us for after life. Thus, I brought from Italy the idea of fine staircases, and have consequently spoiled my house, making the rooms all smaller than they should have been. The most important thing is to learn to rule oneself. If I allowed myself to go on unchecked, I could easily ruin myself and all about me."

We talked then about ill health, and the reciprocity of body and mind.

"It is incredible," said Goethe, "how much the mind can do to sustain the body. I suffer often from a disordered state of the bowels, but my will, and the strength of the upper part of my body, keep me up. The mind must not yield to the body. Thus I work more easily when the barometer is high than when it is low: since I know this, I endeavour, when the barometer is low, to counteract the injurious effect by great exertion,—and my attempt is successful."

"But there are things in poetry which cannot be forced; and we must wait for favourable hours to give us what we cannot obtain by mental determination. Thus I now take my time with my Walpurgis-night, that there may be throughout the proper strength and grace. I have advanced a good way, and hope to have finished it before your departure."

“Wherever there is a point, I have detached it from the individual objects, and given it a general application, so that the reader has no want of allusions, but cannot tell how they are really directed. I have, however, endeavoured to mark out everything in distinct outline, in the antique style, so that there may be nothing vague or undecided, which might suit the romantic style well enough.

“The idea of the distinction between classical and romantic poetry, which is now spread over the whole world, and occasions so many quarrels and divisions, came originally from Schiller and myself. I laid down the maxim of objective treatment in poetry, and would allow no other ; but Schiller, who worked quite in the subjective way, deemed his own fashion the right one, and to defend himself against me, wrote the treatise upon ‘Naïve and Sentimental Poetry.’ He proved to me that I myself, against my will, was romantic, and that my ‘Iphigenia,’ through the predominance of sentiment, was by no means so classical and so much in the antique spirit as some people supposed.

“The Schlegels took up this idea, and carried it further, so that it has now been diffused over the whole world ; and every one talks about classicism and romanticism—of which nobody thought fifty years ago.”

I turned the conversation again upon the cycle of the twelve figures, and Goethe made some explanatory remarks.

“Adam must be represented as I have said, but not quite naked, as I best conceive him after the Fall ; he should be clothed with a thin deer-skin ; and, at the same time, in order to express that he is the father of

the human race, it would be well to place by him his eldest son, a fearless boy, looking boldly about him—a little Hercules stifling a snake in his hand.

“And I have had another thought about Noah, which pleases me better than the first. I would not have him like an Indian Bacchus; but I would represent him as a vintager; this would give the notion of a sort of redeemer, who, as the first fosterer of the vine, made man free from the torment of care and affliction.”

I was charmed with the happy thought, and resolved to note it down.

Goethe then showed me the engraving of Neureuther, for his legend of the horse-shoe.

“The artist,” said I, “has given the Saviour only eight disciples.”

“And even these eight,” replied Goethe, “are too many; and he has very wisely endeavoured to divide them into two groups, and thus to avoid the monotony of an unmeaning procession.”

Wednesday, March 24, 1830.

The liveliest conversation at table to-day with Goethe. He told me about a French poem which had come in manuscript, in the collection of David, under the title “*Le Rire de Mirabeau*.”

“The poem is full of spirit and boldness,” said Goethe, “and you must see it. It seems as if Mephistophiles had prepared the ink for the poet. It is great if he wrote it without having read ‘Faust,’ and no less great if he had read it.”

(Sup.) Monday, March 29, 1830.

This evening for some moments at Goethe’s; he

appeared very calm and cheerful, and in the mildest mood. I found him surrounded by his grandson Wolf and the Countess Caroline Egloffstein, his intimate friend. Wolf gave his dear grandfather a great deal of trouble. He climbed about him, and sat now upon one shoulder, and now upon another. Goethe bore all with the utmost gentleness, inconvenient as the weight of this boy of ten years old must have been to him at his advanced age.

"But, dear Wolf," said the Countess, "do not torment your good grandfather so terribly! He must be quite tired with your weight."

"That does not matter," said Wolf, "we shall soon go to bed, and then my grandfather will have time enough to recover from his fatigue."

"You see," rejoined Goethe, "that love is always somewhat of an impertinent nature."

The conversation turned upon Campe, and his writings for children.

"I have only met with Campe twice in my life," said Goethe. "After an interval of forty years, I last saw him at Carlsbad. I then found him very old, withered, stiff, and formal. He had, during a long life, written only for children, not even for great children of twenty years. He could not endure me. I was an eyesore, a stumbling-block, and he did all he could to avoid me. Chance, however, one day brought me to him quite unexpectedly, and he could not help saying some words to me. 'I have,' said he, 'great respect for the capabilities of your mind! You have attained extraordinary eminence in various departments. But things of that sort do not affect me, and I cannot set the value upon

them which others do.' This rather uncivil candour by no means offended me, and I said all sorts of obliging things in return. Besides, I really have a high opinion of Campe. He has conferred incredible benefits upon children; he is their delight, and, so to speak, their gospel. I should like to see him a little corrected, merely on account of two or three terrible stories which he has had the indiscretion not only to write, but also to introduce into his collection for children. Why should we burden the cheerful, fresh, innocent fancy of children with such horrid impressions?

(Sup.) Monday, April 5, 1830.

It is well known that Goethe is no friend to spectacles.

"It may be a mere whim of mine," said he, on various occasions, "but I cannot overcome it. Whenever a stranger steps up to me with spectacles on his nose, a discordant feeling comes over me, which I cannot master. It annoys me so much, that on the very threshold it takes away a great part of my benevolence, and so spoils my thoughts, that an unconstrained natural development of my own nature is altogether impossible. It always makes on me the impression of the *desobligeant*, as if a stranger would say something rude to me at the first greeting. I feel this still stronger, since it has been impressed upon me for years how obnoxious spectacles are. If a stranger now comes with spectacles, I think immediately—'he has not read my latest poems!' and that is of itself a little to his disadvantage; or 'he has read them, knows their peculiarity, and sets them at naught,' and that is still worse. The only

man with whom spectacles do not annoy me, is Zelter ; with all others they are horrible. It always seems to me as if I am to serve strangers as an object for strict examination, and as if with their armed glances they would penetrate my most secret thoughts, and spy out every wrinkle of my old face. But whilst they thus endeavour to make my acquaintance, they destroy all fair equality between us, as they prevent me from compensating myself by making theirs. For what do I gain from a man into whose eyes I cannot look when he is speaking, and the mirror of whose soul is veiled to me by a pair of glasses which dazzle me ?”

“Some one has remarked,” added I, “that wearing spectacles makes men conceited, because spectacles raise them to a degree of sensual perfection which is far above the power of their own nature, but through which the delusion at last creeps in, that this artificial eminence is the force of their own nature after all.”

“The remark is very good,” returned Goethe, “it appears to have proceeded from a natural philosopher. However, when examined, it is not tenable. For if this were actually the case, all blind men would of necessity be very modest ; and, on the other hand, all endowed with excellent eyes would be conceited. But this is not the case ; we rather find that all mentally and bodily endowed men are the most modest, while, on the other hand, all who have some peculiar mental defect think a great deal more of themselves. It appears that bountiful Nature has given to all those whom she has not enough endowed in higher respects, imagination and presumption by way of compensation and complement.

“Besides, modesty and presumption are moral things of so spiritual a nature, that they have little to do with the body. With narrow-minded persons, and those in a state of mental darkness, we find conceit; while with mental clearness and high endowments we never find it. In such cases there is generally a joyful feeling of strength; but since this strength is actual, the feeling is anything else you please, only not conceit.”

We still conversed on various other subjects, and came at last to the “Chaos”—the Weimar journal conducted by Frau von Goethe—in which not only the German gentlemen and ladies of the place take part, but also the young English, French, and other foreigners who reside here; so that almost every number presents a mixture of nearly all the best known European tongues.

“It was a good thought of my daughter,” said Goethe, “and she should be praised and thanked for having achieved this highly original journal, and kept the individual members of our society in such activity that it has now lasted for nearly a year. It is certainly only a dilettante pastime, and I know very well that nothing great and durable will proceed from it; but still it is very neat, and, to a certain extent, a mirror of the intellectual eminence of our present Weimar society. Then, which is the principal thing, it gives employment to our young gentlemen and ladies, who often do not know what to do with themselves; through this, too, they have an intellectual centre which affords them subjects for discussion and conversation, and preserves them from mere empty hollow

chat. I read every sheet just as it comes from the press, and can say that, on the whole, I have met with nothing stupid, but occasionally something very pretty. What, for instance, could you say against the elegy, by Frau von Bechtolsheim, upon the death of the Grand-Duchess Dowager? Is not the poem very pretty? The only thing that could be said against it, or, indeed, against most that is written by our young ladies and gentlemen is, that, like trees too full of sap, which have a number of parasitical shoots, they have a superabundance of thoughts and feelings which they cannot control, so that they often do not know how to restrain themselves, or to leave off in the right place. This is the case with Frau von Bechtolsheim. In order to preserve a rhyme, she had added another line, which was completely detrimental to the poem, and in some measure spoiled it. I saw this fault in the manuscript, and was able to strike it out in time.

“One must be an old practitioner,” he added, laughing, “to understand striking out. Schiller was particularly great in that. I once saw him, on the occasion of his ‘*Musenalmanach*,’ reduce a pompous poem of *two-and-twenty* strophes to *seven*; and no loss resulted from this terrible operation. On the contrary, those seven strophes contained all the good and effective thoughts of the two-and-twenty.”

(Sup.*) Monday, April 19, 1830.

Goethe gave me an account of a visit, which he had received to-day, from two Russians. “They were, upon the whole, very agreeable people,” said he; “but one of them did not appear very amiable,

inasmuch as he did not utter a single word during his whole visit. He entered with a silent bow, did not open his lips during his stay, and after half an hour took his leave with another silent salutation. He appeared to have come merely to see me and to observe me. He did not take his eyes off me, whilst I sat opposite. That annoyed me, and I therefore began to rattle away the maddest stuff, just as it came into my head. I believe I took the United States of North America as my theme, which I treated with the utmost levity, saying at random all I knew and all I did not know. However, this appeared to please my two foreigners, for they quitted me, as it seemed, not at all dissatisfied."

Wednesday, April 21, 1830.

To-day I took my leave of Goethe, as I was to set out with his son for Italy to-morrow morning. We said a great deal in reference to the journey, and he especially recommended me to observe well, and now and then to write to him.

I felt some emotion at leaving Goethe, but was consoled by his strong healthy appearance, and the confident hope that I should be happy enough to see him again.

When I took my departure he gave me an album, in which he had written these words,—

"TO THE TRAVELLERS.

" "Es geht vorüber eh' ich's gewahr werde,*

Und verwandelt sich eh' ich's merke.'"—*Job.*

"Weimar, 21st April, 1830."

* "Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not; he passeth on also, but I perceive him not."—*Job.—Trans.*

(Sup.*) Thursday, April 22, 1830.

Dined with Goethe. Frau von Goethe was present, and the conversation was agreeably animated. Still, little or nothing of it remains in my mind.

During dinner, a foreigner, who was passing through this town, was announced, with the remark that he had no time to wait, and must set off the next morning. Goethe sent word to him that he regretted that he could not see any one to-day, but that he would perhaps see him to-morrow at noon. "I think," said he, laughing, "that will be enough." But, at the same time, he promised his daughter that he would wait after dinner the visit of young Henning, whom she had introduced, out of consideration for his brown eyes, which were said to be like those of his mother.

Frankfort, Sunday, April 24, 1830.

At about eleven o'clock, I took a walk round the city, and through the gardens, towards the Taunus Mountain, and was delighted with the noble prospect and vegetation. The day before yesterday, at Weimar, the trees were only in the bud, but here I find the new shoots of the chestnuts already a foot long, and those of the linden trees a quarter of a yard. The grass was a foot high, and thus at the gate I met some girls carrying heavy basket-loads.

I went through the gardens to get a free prospect of the Taunus Mountain; there was a fresh breeze, the clouds moved from the south-west, and cast their shadows upon the mountain as they proceeded to the north-east. Between the gardens I saw some storks

alight and rise again, which, taking place in the sunlight between the passing white clouds and the blue sky, produced a pretty effect, and completed the character of the scene. When I returned, I met at the gate the finest cows, brown, white, speckled, and with sleek coats.

The air here is pleasant and healthy, and the water has a sweetish taste. I have never tasted such good beef-steaks at Hamburg as here, and I have excellent white bread.

It is fair time, and the bustle, fiddling and piping in the streets, lasts from morning till late at night. I was much struck by a Savoyard boy, who turned a hurdy-gurdy, and led behind him a dog, on which a monkey was riding. He whistled and sang to us, and for a long time tried to make us give him something. We threw him down more than he could have expected, and I thought he would throw up to us a look of gratitude. However, he did nothing of the kind, but pocketed his money, and immediately looked after others to give him more.

Frankfort, Sunday, April 25, 1830.

This morning we took a ride about the city, in a very elegant carriage belonging to our host. The magnificent buildings, the beautiful stream, the gardens and grounds, and enticing summer-houses, were refreshing to the senses. However, I soon made the remark, that it is requisite for the mind to elicit thoughts from objects, and that without this everything, after all, will prove indifferent and unmeaning.

At dinner, at the *table d'hôte*, I saw many faces, but

few expressive enough to fix my attention. However, the head waiter interested me highly, so that my eyes constantly followed him and all his movements; and indeed he was a remarkable being. The guests who sat at the long table were about two hundred in number, and it seems almost incredible when I say that nearly the whole of the attendance was performed by the head waiter, since he put on and took off all the dishes, while the other waiters only handed them to him and received them from him. During all this proceeding nothing was spilt, no one was incommoded, but all went off lightly and nimbly, as if by the operation of a spirit. Thus, thousands of plates and dishes flew from his hands upon the table, and again from the table to the hands of the attendants behind him. Quite absorbed in his vocation the whole man was nothing but eyes and hands, and he merely opened his closed lips for short answers and directions. Then he not only attended to the table, but to the orders for wine and the like, and so well remembered everything, that when the meal was over he knew everybody's score, and took the money. I admired the comprehensive power, the presence of mind, and the strong memory of this remarkable young man. At the same time he was perfectly quiet and self-possessed, and always ready for a jest and a smart retort, so that a constant smile played upon his lips. A French captain of the old guard complained to him, at the end of the meal, that the ladies retired. He at once gave the evasive answer:—" *C'est pour vous autres ; nous sommes sans passion.*" He spoke French and English perfectly, and I was told that he was master of three languages besides. I

afterwards entered into conversation with him, and found reason to admire his rare cultivation in every respect.

At the performance of "Don Juan" in the evening, we found reason to regret Weimar. The voices of the company were good, and their talents were fair, but they all played like children of nature who owed nothing to tuition. They did not enunciate clearly, and went on as if no public were present. The acting of some of them gave occasion to the remark that the ignoble without character is vulgar and intolerable, while character at once elevates it into the higher region of art. The public was very loud and boisterous, and there was no lack of calls and encores. Zerlina fared both well and ill, for one-half of the house hissed, while the other applauded. Party spirit was thus heightened, and always resulted in an uproar.

(Sup.*) Wednesday, May 12, 1830.

Before Goethe's window stood a little bronze figure of Moses; a copy of the renowned original, by Michael Angelo. The arms appeared to me too long and too stout in proportion to the rest of the body, and I openly expressed this opinion to Goethe.

"But the two heavy tables with the Ten Commandments," exclaimed he, sharply, "do you think it was a trifle to carry them? And do you believe that Moses, who had to command and to curb an army of Jews, could have been contented with mere ordinary arms?"

Goethe laughed as he said this, so that I could not find out whether I was really in error, or whether he was defending the artist by way of a joke.

Milan, May 28, 1830.

I have now been here for three weeks, and it is high time for me to write down something.

The great Teatro de la Scala, to our regret, was closed. We went in and saw it filled with scaffolding. Various repairs are going on, and we are told that an addition is being made of a tier of boxes. The principal singers have taken advantage of this opportunity to travel. Some they say are in Paris, some in Vienna.

I visited the Marionette theatre (Puppet-show). This theatre is perhaps, of its kind, the best in the world. It has a high celebrity, and as soon as you approach Milan you hear of it.

The Teatro de la Canobiana, with its five tiers of boxes, is the largest after La Scala, and holds three thousand persons. I like it very much. I have often been in it, and have always seen the same opera and the same ballet. For three weeks they have performed Rossini's opera "*Il Conte Ory*," and the ballet "*L' Orfana di Genevra*." The scenes painted by San Quirico, or under his direction, have a most pleasing effect, and are modest enough to allow themselves to be outshone by the dresses of the actors. San Quirico, it is said, has many clever persons in his employ. All orders are sent to him in the first instance, and he sends them to others, and gives directions, so that everything is done in his name, and he himself does but little. It is said that he gives a handsome yearly salary to several artists of talent, and pays it even when they are ill and do nothing throughout the year.

During the performance of the opera I was highly

pleased not to see the prompter's box, which generally so unpleasantly conceals the feet of the actor. I was also pleased with the situation of the conductor. He stood a little raised in the middle of the orchestra, next to the stalls, so that he could see and be seen by his whole band, giving directions to the right and left, and having a full view of the stage over their heads. In Weimar, on the contrary, the conductor is so placed that he has indeed a full view of the stage, but the band is behind him, so that he is always obliged to turn round if he would give directions to any one of the players. The band itself is very numerous. I counted sixteen basses, eight of which were placed at each extremity. The players, who are nearly a hundred in number, are turned towards the conductor on both sides, so that they have their backs turned to the pit-boxes by the proscenium, with one eye towards the stage and the other towards the pit, and with the conductor directly in front.

With respect to the voices of the singers, I was delighted with the purity and strength of the tone, and the freedom and absence of effort in their enunciation.

I thought of Zelter, and wished he was by my side. I was pleased above all with the voice of Signora Corradi-Pantanelli, who played the page. I spoke with others concerning this excellent singer, and heard that she was engaged for next winter at La Scala. The prima donna who played the Countess Adele, was Signora Albertini, a young debutante. There is in her voice something very soft and pure, as the light of the sun. Every one who comes from Germany must be delighted with her to the highest degree. A young

basso also distinguished himself. His voice is very powerful, but somewhat inflexible; and his acting, though unconstrained, indicates the infancy of his art. The choruses went admirably, and kept the greatest precision with regard to the orchestra. With respect to the gesticulation of the actors, I observed a certain quiet moderation, whereas I had anticipated an expression of the lively Italian temperament. The paint was a mere tinge of red, such as one likes to see in nature, and did not at all give the impression of rouged cheeks.

Considering the strength of the orchestra, I found it remarkable that the players never drowned the voices of the singers, but that these always were predominant. I spoke on the subject at the *table d'hôte*, and heard an intelligent young man give the following explanation:—

“The German bands,” said he, “are egotistical, and wish as bands to come out and do something. An Italian band, on the other hand, is discreet. It knows well enough that in an opera the singing of the human voices is the principal matter, and that the orchestral accompaniment should only be subservient. Hence, however many violins, clarionets, trumpets, and basses, are played in an Italian orchestra, the impression of the whole will always be soft and pleasant; while a German band, with a third of the strength, very soon becomes loud and noisy.”

I could not answer words so convincing, and was glad to find my problem so well solved.

“Still,” I remarked, “are not the modern composers also in fault, through making the instrumental part of their operas too strong?”

“Certainly,” replied the stranger, “modern composers have fallen into this fault; but never truly great masters, like Mozart and Rossini. These, indeed, in their accompaniments, introduce distinct themes, independent of the melody of the vocal part; but, nevertheless, they have always used such moderation, that the voice of the singer is always in the ascendant. On the other hand, while with modern masters there is real poverty in the accompaniment, they often drown the singing by their violent instrumentation.”

I gave my assent to these remarks of the intelligent young stranger. The person who sat next me at table, told me he was a young Livonian Baron, who had long resided in London and Paris, and had now been here for five years, studying very hard.

I must mention something else which I observed in the opera, and which gave me much pleasure. It is the circumstance that the Italians treat night on the stage not as actual night, but only symbolically. It was always unpleasant to me that, in the German theatres, when it was supposed to be night, a perfect night set in, so that the expression of the actors, and often their persons vanished altogether, and nothing but mere darkness was visible. The Italians manage more wisely. On their stage night is never actual, but only an indication. The back of the stage is a little darkened—that is all—and the actors come so much into the foreground that they are completely lighted, and not the least expression escapes us. In painting the same method should be adopted, and I should be surprised to find pictures in which the faces were so darkened by night that their expression could not be

recognised. I hope I shall never find such a picture by a good master.

I find the same excellent maxim applied in the ballet. A nocturnal scene was represented, in which a girl was attacked by a robber. The stage is only a little darkened, so that all the movements and the expression of the face are perfectly visible. At the shrieks of the girl the assassin escapes, and the peasants hasten from their cottages with lights. These are not dim, but of a whitish flame, and it is only by the contrast of this very great brilliancy that we perceive it was night in the previous scene.

What I had been told in Germany about the *loud* Italian public, I have found confirmed ; and, indeed, the longer the opera is played, the more does the noise of the public increase. A fortnight ago I saw one of the first representations of the “Conte Ory.” The singers were received with applause on their entrance ; the audience, to be sure, talked during the less striking scenes, but when good airs were sung all was still, and general approbation rewarded the singers. The choruses went excellently, and I admired the precision with which voices and orchestra always kept together. But now, when the opera has been given every evening since that time, the public has totally ceased to pay attention ; everybody talks, and the house resounds with the noise. Scarcely a hand is stirred, and one can scarcely imagine how the singers can open their lips on the stage, or how the instrumentalists can play a note in the orchestra. There is an end to zeal and precision ; and the foreigner, who likes to hear some-

thing, would be in despair—if despair were at all possible in so cheerful an assembly.

Milan, May 30, 1830.

I will here record something which I have hitherto remarked with pleasure, or which has at any rate interested me in Italy.

On the Simplon, amid the desert of snow and mist, in the vicinity of a refuge, a boy and his little sister were journeying up the mountain by the side of our carriage. Both had on their backs little baskets filled with wood, which they had gathered in the lower mountains, where there is still some vegetation. The boy gave us some specimens of rock crystal and other stone, for which we gave him some small coins. The delight with which he cast stolen glances at his money as he passed by our carriage, made upon me an indelible impression. Never before had I seen such a heavenly expression of felicity. I could not but reflect that God has placed all sources and capabilities for happiness in the human heart; and that, with respect to happiness, it is perfectly indifferent how and where one dwells.

(Sup. *) Monday, August 2, 1830.

The news of the Revolution of July, which had already commenced, reached Weimar to-day, and set every one in a commotion. I went in the course of the afternoon to Goethe's. "Now," exclaimed he to me, as I entered, "what do you think of this great event? The volcano has come to an eruption; everything is in flames, and we have no longer a transaction with closed doors!"

“A frightful story,” returned I. “But what could be expected under such notoriously bad circumstances, and with such a ministry, otherwise than that the whole would end in the expulsion of the royal family?”

“We do not appear to understand each other, my good friend,” returned Goethe. “I am not speaking of those people, but of something quite different. I am speaking of the contest, so important for science, between Cuvier and Geoffrey de Saint Hilaire, which has come to an open rupture in the academy.”

This expression of Goethe’s was so very unexpected that I did not know what to say, and for some minutes felt my thoughts perfectly at a standstill.

“The matter is of the highest importance,” continued Goethe, “and you can form no conception of what I felt at the intelligence of the sitting of the 19th of July. We have now in Geoffrey de Saint Hilaire a powerful and permanent ally. I see how great must be the interest of the French scientific world in this affair; because, notwithstanding the terrible political commotion, the sitting of the 19th of July was very fully attended. However, the best of it is, that the synthetic manner of treating nature, introduced by Geoffrey into France, cannot be kept back any more. The affair is now become public, through the free discussion of the academy, and that in the presence of so large an audience. It is no longer referred to secret committees, and arranged and got rid of, and smothered behind closed doors. From the present time, mind will rule over matter in the physical investigations of the French. There will be glances of the great maxims of creation, of the mysterious workshop of

God ! Besides, what is all intercourse with nature, if, by the analytical method, we merely occupy ourselves with individual material parts, and do not feel the breath of the spirit, which prescribes to every part its direction, and orders, or sanctions, every deviation, by means of an inherent law !

“ I have exerted myself in this great affair for fifty years. At first, I was alone, then I found support, and now at last, to my great joy, I am surpassed by congenial minds. When I sent my first discovery of intermediate bones to Peter Camper, I was, to my infinite mortification, utterly ignored. With Blumenbach I fared no better, though, after personal intercourse, he came over to my side. But then I gained kindred spirits in Sömmering, Oken, Dalton, Carus, and other equally excellent men. And now Geoffrey de Saint Hilaire is decidedly on our side, and with him all his important scholars and adherents in France. This occurrence is of incredible value to me ; and I justly rejoice that I have at last witnessed the universal victory of a subject to which I have devoted my life, and which, moreover, is my own *par excellence*.”

(Sup.*) Saturday, August 21, 1830.

I recommended to Goethe a hopeful young man. He promised to do something for him, but appeared to have little confidence.

“ Whoever,” said he, “ has, like myself, during a whole life lost valuable time and money through the protection of young talents, and those talents which have at first awakened the highest hopes, but of which nothing has come in the end, must, by degrees, lose

all enthusiasm and pleasure in pursuing such a course. It is now the turn of you younger people to take my part and play the Mæcenas.”

Apropos of this declaration of Goethe's, I compared the delusive promises of youth with trees which bear double blossom, but no fruit.

I * was about to proceed with my communication, but I was interrupted, and wrote nothing more during my further residence in Italy, though there was not a day in which I did not receive some important impression, and make some important observation. It was not until I had parted from Goethe's son, and had left the Alps behind me, that I wrote as follows to Goethe :—

Geneva, Sept. 12, 1830.

I have so much to tell you, that I do not know where I shall begin, and where I shall end.

Your excellency has remarked in jest that travelling on is a very pleasant matter, if there were no coming back. I find this remark confirmed to my sorrow, as I feel myself at a sort of crossway, and do not know which direction to take.

My residence in Italy, short as it was, has not been—as indeed might be expected—without important influence upon me. A bountiful nature has been discovered to me with its wonders, and has asked me how far I have advanced to comprehend such a language. Great works of man, great actions have excited me, and have made me look to myself to ascertain my own capabilities. Existences of a thousand

* Here, of course, Eckerman speaks.—*Trans.*

kinds have come into contact with me, and have asked me how it stands with my own. Thus I find living within me three great requisites,—namely, to increase my knowledge ; to improve my condition ; and, above all, in order to secure these, to do something.

With respect to this last requisite, I am by no means in doubt as to what is to be done. For a long time I have had at heart a work, which has occupied my leisure for some years, and which is as far complete, as a new-built ship, which still lacks its sails and rigging to be fit for sea.

I mean those conversations on great maxims in all departments of science and art, as well as on the various revelations touching higher human interests, works of mind, and the chief personages of the age, to which the six years, which I have been happy enough to pass in your society, have offered such frequent occasion. These conversations have been for me a source of infinite culture ; and, as I have found the greatest delight in hearing them, and being instructed by them, I wish to give the same pleasure to others, by writing them down, and thus preserving them for the better class of humanity.

Your excellency has occasionally seen some sheets of these conversations ; you have honoured them with your approbation, and have frequently encouraged me to proceed in my undertaking. This I have done at intervals, as well as my unsettled life at Weimar allowed, so that now I have abundant materials for about two volumes.

When I set out for Italy I did not put these important manuscripts into my trunk with my other papers, but, after sealing them up in a separate parcel, confided

them to the care of our friend Soret, with the request that, if any mishap befel me on the journey, and I did not return, he would place them in your hands.

After the visit to Venice, during our second stay at Milan, I was attacked by a fever, so that I was very ill for some nights, and lay for a whole week in a very miserable condition, without the slightest appetite. In my lonely hours I chiefly thought of the manuscript, and felt uneasy when I reflected that it was not in a state sufficiently clear and complete to be used at once. The fact occurred to me that a great deal was written only with pencil, that some was obscure and improperly expressed, that much was merely hinted, and that, in a word, a regular revision and a last hand would be requisite.

Under these circumstances, and with this feeling, I had an anxious desire for my papers. The pleasure of seeing Naples and Rome was gone, and I felt a wish to return to Germany, that, secluded from everybody, I might complete the manuscript.

Without mentioning what was working within me, I spoke to your son about the state of my health. He felt the danger of dragging me farther in the sultry climate, and we agreed that I should in the first place visit Genoa, and that, if my health did not improve there, I should be at liberty to return to Germany.

In accordance with this view we had resided for some time in Genoa, when we received a letter from you, in which you seemed, though at a distance, to feel our position, and stated that if I had any inclination to return, I should be welcome.

We paid all reverence to your hint, and were

delighted that, from the other side of the Alps, you gave your assent to an arrangement which had just been made between us. I resolved to set off at once, but your son thought it better that I should remain a little longer, and set off on the same day as himself.

This I did readily, and it was at five o'clock in the morning, on Sunday the 25th July, that we gave each other a farewell embrace in the streets of Genoa. Two carriages were stationed; one was to go along the coast up to Leghorn, the other was to cross the mountains for Turin, and in this I placed myself with other passengers. Thus we parted in opposite directions, both deeply moved, and with the heartiest wishes for our mutual welfare.

After a three days' journey, in great heat and dust, through Novi, Alexandria, and Asti, I came to Turin, where it was necessary for me to rest some days, looking about me, and to wait a more fitting opportunity to cross the Alps. This occurred on Monday the 2nd of August, when we crossed Mount Cenis, and arrived at Chambery at six o'clock in the evening. On the afternoon of the 7th, I found opportunity to proceed to Aix; and late on the 8th, amid rain and darkness, I reached Geneva, where I put up at the sign of the "Crown."

This inn was thronged with Englishmen, who, having just come from Paris, and having been eye-witnesses of the extraordinary scenes that had taken place there, had a great deal to tell. You may imagine what an effect the first experience of these world-shaking events had upon me, with what interest I read the newspapers, which had been suppressed in

Piedmont, and how eagerly I listened to the narratives of the new comers who arrived every day, and to the gossip and disputes of the politicians at the *table d'hôte*. Everybody was in a state of the greatest excitement, and an endeavour was made to trace the consequences which might result to the rest of Europe from such violent measures. I visited our fair friend, Sylvester, and Soret's parents and brother; and as in such excited times one must have an opinion, I laid it down in my own mind that the French ministers were chiefly culpable for reducing the monarch to measures, by which confidence and respect for the sovereign were compromised with the people.

It was my intention to write to you in detail immediately on my arrival at Geneva; but the excitement and distraction of the first days were so great, that I could not collect myself to communicate facts in the form I desired. Then, on the 15th of August, I received a letter from Genoa, from our friend Sterling, containing information which troubled me exceedingly, and prevented all communication with Weimar. Sterling told me in this letter that your son, on the very day when he had parted from me, had broken his collar-bone, in consequence of the carriage overturning, and had been laid up at Spezzia. I wrote at once, by way of reply, that I was ready to cross the Alps at the very first hint, and that I should not leave Genoa to proceed on my way to Germany until I received perfectly satisfactory news from Genoa. In expectation of this, I took a private lodging, and made use of my stay to improve myself in the French language.

At last, on the 28th of August, a double day of

rejoicing was prepared for me; a second letter from Sterling delighted me with the information that your son had in a short time quite recovered from his accident, was thoroughly safe, sound, and in excellent spirits. Thus all my anxiety on his account was at once removed, and in the stillness of my heart I cited the lines,—

“Du danke Gott wenn er dich presst,
Und dank' ihm wenn er dich wieder entlässt.”

“Give thanks to God when hard he presses,
And thank him, too, when he releases.”

I now seriously set about giving you an account of myself, and was about to tell you much the same as what is written in the preceding pages. I was about to inquire again whether I might not be permitted, in quiet seclusion, far away from Weimar, to complete that manuscript, which I have so much at heart, since I felt that I could not be perfectly free and happy till I had laid before you the long-cherished work, stitched and fairly copied, that you might sanction its publication.

Now, however, I have received letters from Weimar, in which I see that my speedy return is expected, and that there is an intention to give me a place. I can but return thanks for such kindness, though it seems counter to my present plans, and brings me into a state of discord with myself.

If I now returned to Weimar, a speedy completion of my literary plans would be impossible. The old distractions would return, and in our little city, where one person is perpetually in contact with another, I

should again be disturbed by various trivial circumstances, without being of decided use to myself or any one else.

Weimar, I grant, contains much that is good and excellent, much that I have long loved, and that I love still. Nevertheless, when I look back upon it, I fancy that I see, at the city gates, an angel with a fiery sword, to prevent my entrance, and to drive me back.

I am, to my own knowledge, a strange sort of being. To certain things I adhere most constantly—I cleave to my plans for many years, and obstinately carry them out through a thousand windings and difficulties; but in the several collisions of ordinary life no one is more dependent, wavering, and susceptible of impressions than myself. These two peculiarities constitute the varying, and, at the same time, secure destiny of my life. If I look back upon the path along which I have travelled, the circumstances through which I have passed present a motley variety; but if I look deeper, I see through all a certain simple track leading to a higher aspiration, and that I have even succeeded in ennobling and improving myself at successive steps of the scale.

Even now it is this very impressionable and pliable peculiarity of my character which, from time to time, compels me to rectify my mode of life; just as a mariner, whom the caprices of various winds have turned from his course, always sails again the old track.

Taking an office is now not compatible with the literary plans I have so long deferred. Neither is it any longer my plan to give lessons to young English-

men. I have learned the language, which is all I wanted, and at this I am delighted. I do not deny the advantages I have gained from a long intercourse with young foreigners, but everything has its end, and its period of change.

Altogether, oral instruction and influence are quite out of my way. They belong to a profession for which I have neither talent nor training. I am totally without the gift of eloquence; so that, generally speaking, any living soul who sits opposite to me exercises such an influence over me, that I forget myself, that I am absorbed in the peculiarities and interests of another, and that, on this account, I feel a sense of oppression, and can rarely attain a free and powerful operation of my thoughts.

On the other hand, with my paper before me, I feel quite free and self-possessed. Hence the *written* development of my thoughts is my real delight, and my real life, so that I regard every day as lost on which I have not written some pages to my own satisfaction.

It is now an impulse of my whole nature to act from myself upon a wide circle, to acquire influence in literature, and, as a furtherance of my good fortune, to gain some renown.

Literary fame considered by itself is, indeed, scarcely worth the trouble of earning; I have even seen that it can be very burthensome and distressing. Nevertheless, it has this advantage, that it shows the active aspirant that his operations have found a soil,—and this is a divine sort of feeling, which elevates, and gives a degree of thought and power which would not otherwise be attained.

If, on the other hand, one has confined oneself too long in a narrow sphere, the mind and character are injured ; one becomes at last incapable of great things, and to elevate oneself becomes a difficulty.

If the Grand-Duchess really intends to do something for me, persons of such high rank can easily find a form in which to manifest their friendly disposition. If she will support and patronize my next literary efforts she will do a good work, the fruits of which shall not be lost.

Of the prince, I can say that he has a special place in my heart. I expect much good from his mental capacity and his character, and shall be glad to place my little acquirements at his disposal. I shall constantly endeavour to increase in cultivation, and he will constantly grow older ; so that while I improve in giving, he will improve in receiving.

But, above all, I have at heart the completion of that manuscript, which I mention once more. I should like to remain for some months in quiet seclusion, with my betrothed and her relations, in the neighbourhood of Göttingen, and to devote myself to this task, that freeing myself from an old burden, I may prepare myself for others anew. My life has been for some years at a stand-still, and I should like it once more to flow freely. Moreover, my health is delicate and uncertain, I am not sure of remaining long in this world, and I should like to leave behind me something good, that would preserve my name for a while in the memory of mankind.

I can, however, do nothing without you—without your sanction and your blessing. Your further wishes

with respect to myself are unknown to me, nor do I know the good that is designed for me among those in high places. With me the case stands as I have stated, and from my clear explanation you will easily see, whether reasons important for my happiness render my speedy return desirable, or whether, with a heart at ease, I may carry out my own mental plans.

In a few days I shall go from here through Neufchatel, Colmar, and Strasbourg, stopping by the way to look about me, and shall proceed to Frankfort, if occasion occurs. Now, I should be happy if I could receive a few lines from you at Frankfort, and beg of you to address me there, *poste restante*.

I am glad to relieve my mind by the confession of its heavy burden, and hope in my next letter to communicate something of a lighter nature to your excellency.

Pray give my compliments to Hofrath Meyer, Oberbaudirector Coudray, Professor Riemer, Chancellor von Müller, and whoever is with you, and may be kind enough to remember me.

As for yourself, I press you to my heart, and, retaining feelings of the deepest love and reverence, remain, wherever I may be,

Ever yours,

E.

Genoa, Sept. 14, 1830.

To my great delight I learned, from your last letter at Geneva, that the gaps and the conclusion of the "Classical Walpurgis-night" have been happily surmounted. The first three acts, it seems, are quite done, the "Helen" is connected together, and thus the

hardest task is accomplished. The end, as you have told me, is already complete, and I hope that the fourth act will likewise be soon conquered, and that thus something great may be accomplished for the edification and exercise of future ages. My expectations are extraordinary, and every piece of news which shows me a triumph of the poetical powers will be received by me with delight.

During my travels in Italy I have had frequent occasion to think of "Faust," and to apply some classical passages. When in Italy I saw the handsome men, and the fresh thriving children, I thought of the verses :—

"Hier ist das Wohlbehagen erblich," &c.

" On every cheek and lip we trace
Joy, as the patrimonial wealth ;
Each is immortal in his place,
Each glowing with content and health.

" And thus beneath the sunny days
To manly strength the infant grows,
We look, exclaiming with amaze—
' Children of men, or gods, are those ?' "

On the other hand, when I was absorbed in the sight of the beautiful scenery, and feasted my heart and my eyes on lakes, mountains, and valleys, some invisible little devil seemed to be making sport with me, whispering into my ear :—

" If I had not rattled and shaken
Would the world have been so fair ? "

All power of calm contemplation was then gone, absurdity began to rule, I felt a sort of revolution in

my soul, and I could not do otherwise than finish with a laugh.

On these occasions I felt plainly enough that the poet should be always positive. Men use poets to express what they cannot express themselves. They are overcome by a feeling—by a phenomenon; they look after words, but find their own stock insufficient, and then the poet comes to their assistance, and by satisfying them sets them free.

With this feeling I have often blessed those first lines, while I have laughingly cursed the others every day. But who could do without them in the position for which they are made, and in which they have the most beautiful influence.

I have not kept a regular journal in Italy; the phenomena are too great, too numerous, and too varied for me to be willing or able to master them in a moment. Nevertheless, I have kept my eyes and ears open, and have made many observations. I shall group my reminiscences together, and treat of them under separate heads. I have especially made some good observations relative to the "Theory of Colours," which I hope shortly to produce. There is in them nothing actually new, but still it is pleasant to find new manifestations of an old law.

At Genoa, Sterling displayed a great interest for the theory. What he has learned of Newton's theory has not satisfied him, and hence he has open ears for those principles of your theory which I am often able to communicate. If opportunity could be found to send a copy of the work to Genoa, I may venture to say that such a present would not be unacceptable to him.

Here in Geneva, I found, three weeks ago, an ardent disciple in our lady-friend, Sylvestre. In this instance, I have remarked that the simple is harder to be apprehended than one supposes, and that it requires great practice to find constantly the fundamental principle amid the various details of the phenomena. The exercise, however, gives great dexterity to the mind, since nature is very delicate, and one must always take care not to do her violence by too hasty an expression.

Generally, however, there is not in Geneva the trace of any interest in so large a subject. Not only is the library here without a copy of your "Theory of Colours," but it is not even known that there is such a work in the world. This may be the fault more of the Germans than of the Genevese, but it annoys me and provokes me to caustic remarks.

Lord Byron, it is well known, remained here for some time; and as he did not like society, he passed his days and nights in the open country, and on the lake, of which I have more to say in this place, and of which there is a noble monument in his "Childe Harold." He also remarked the colour of the Rhone; and though he could not divine the cause of it, he nevertheless showed a susceptible eye. In a note to the third canto, he says,—

"The colour of the Rhone at Geneva is blue to a depth of tint which I have never seen equalled in water, salt or fresh, except in the Mediterranean and Archipelago."

The Rhone, as it narrows itself to pass through Geneva, divides itself into two arms, which are crossed

by four bridges, and on these the colour of the water may be well observed by all who are coming or going.

Now it is remarkable that the water of one arm is blue, as was perceived by Byron, while that of the other is green. The arm in which the water appears blue flows more rapidly, and has so deep a channel that no light can penetrate it, and consequently there is perfect darkness below. The very clear water acts as a dense medium, and from our well-known laws the finest blue is produced. The water of the other arm is not so deep, the light reaches the bottom, so that we see the pebbles ; and as it is not dark enough to become blue, but at the same time is not smooth, and the ground is not sufficiently pure, white, and shining, to be yellow, the colour remains between the two extremes, and appears as green.

If, like Byron, I had a taste for mad pranks, and the means to play them off, I would make the following experiment,—

In the green arm of the Rhone, near the bridge, where people pass by thousands every day, I would fasten a large black board, or something of the kind, so far below the surface that a pure blue would be produced ; and, not far from this, a very large piece of white shining tin, at such a depth that a clouded yellow would appear in the sunshine. When the people as they passed saw the yellow and blue spots in the green water, they would be teased by a riddle, which they would not be able to solve. One thinks of all sorts of pleasantries when one travels ; but this seems to me to be good of its kind, inasmuch as there is some sense in it, and it might be of some use.

Some time ago I was at a bookseller's, and in the first duodecimo which I took into my hands, my eye fell upon a passage, which I translate thus,—

“But tell me; if we discover a truth, must we communicate it to others? If you make it known, you are persecuted by an infinite number of people who gain their living from the error you oppose, saying that this error itself is the truth, and that the greatest error is that which tends to destroy it.”

It seemed to me that this passage applied so well to the manner in which the scientific by profession have received your “Theory of Colours,” that it must have been written on purpose; and I was so highly pleased, that I bought the book for the sake of the passage. It contained the “Paul and Virginia,” and the “Indian Cottage,” by Bernardin de St. Pierre, and hence I had no reason to regret my bargain. I read it with delight; the clear noble sense of the author was quite refreshing, and I could perceive and appreciate his refined art, especially in the apt application of well-known similes.

I have here, too, made my first acquaintance with Rousseau and Montesquieu, but lest my letter should itself become a book, I will for the present pass over these, as well as much else which I should like to say.

Since I have disburdened my mind of the long letter of the day before yesterday, I have felt more free and cheerful than I have been for years, and I could go on writing and talking for ever. It will be absolutely necessary for me to stay, at least for the present, at a distance from Weimar. I hope that you approve this

plan, and can already anticipate the time when you will say that I have done right.

To-morrow, the theatre here will open with the "Barber of Seville," which I mean to see; then I seriously intend to take my departure. The weather seems to clear up and be favourable. It has rained here since your birthday, which opened with storms. These were passing all day long in this direction, from Lyons up the Rhone, across the lake, and towards Lausanne, so that it was thundering constantly. I pay 16 sous a day for a room, which commands a beautiful prospect of the lake and the mountains. Yesterday it was raining below, the weather was cold, and the summits of the Jura appeared, after the passing shower, for the first time white with snow, which, however, has disappeared to-day. The promontory of Mont-Blanc begins already to array itself in permanent white; along the shore of the lake, amid the green of a luxuriant vegetation, some trees are still yellow and brown; the nights become cold, and we can see that autumn is at hand.

My hearty remembrances to Frau von Goethe, Fräulein Ulrica, and Walter, Wolf, and Alma. I have a great deal to tell Frau von Goethe about Sterling, and shall write to-morrow.

I hope to receive a letter from your excellency at Frankfort, and am happy in the anticipation.

With the best wishes and most constant affection, I remain,

E.

On the 21st of September I set off from Geneva, and after remaining a couple of days at Berne, I arrived on the 27th at Strasburg, where, again, I remain for some days.

Here, as I passed a hair-dresser's window, I saw a small bust of Napoleon, which, viewed from the street against the darkness of the room, exhibited all the gradations of blue, from a pale milky hue to a deep violet. I suspected that this bust, seen from the interior of the room against the light, would exhibit all the gradations of yellow; and I could not resist the impulse of the moment to rush into the house, though the owners were unknown to me.

My first glance was at the bust, which to my great delight shone upon me with the most brilliant colours on the *active* side from the palest yellow to a dark ruby-red. I asked eagerly whether this bust of the great hero was not to be disposed of. The master replied that, from a similar respect for the emperor, he had lately brought the bust from Paris, but that since my affection seemed, from my enthusiastic joy, greatly to exceed his own, the right of possession belonged to me, and he would readily part with it.

This glass image was of inestimable value in my eyes, and I could not refrain from looking at the worthy owner with some astonishment, when for a few francs he placed it in my hands. I sent it with a remarkable medal, purchased at Milan, as a little present to Goethe, who could prize it according to its merits.

Afterwards, at Frankfort, I received the following letters:—

FIRST LETTER.

I write to tell you as briefly as possible that both your letters from Geneva arrived safe, though not before the 26th of September. I have only to say in haste,—remain in Frankfort till we have thoroughly considered how you are to pass next winter.

I enclose a letter for Herr Geheimrath von Willemer and his lady, which you will be kind enough to deliver as soon as possible. You will find in them two friends, who are united with me in the fullest sense of the word, and will render your abode at Frankfort useful and agreeable.

So much for the present. Write to me as soon as you have received this letter.

Yours faithfully,

GOETHE.

Weimar, 26th September, 1830.

SECOND LETTER.

I send you the heartiest greetings, my dearest friend, in my native city, and hope that you will have passed the few days there in social enjoyments with my excellent friends. If you wish to go to Nordenheim, and to remain there for a short time, I have nothing to object. If you intend in your quiet hours to occupy yourself with the manuscript which is in Soret's hands, I shall be all the better pleased, as I do not wish it to be soon published, but shall be glad to go through it with you and correct it. Its value will be increased if I can attest that it is conceived perfectly in my spirit. More I do not say, but

leave the rest to yourself, and expect to hear farther. Of your other friends I have not spoken to one since the receipt of your letter.

Your hearty wellwisher,

J. W. VON GOETHE.

Weimar, 12th October, 1830.

THIRD LETTER.

The lively impression which you received from the remarkable bust, and the colours it produced—the desire to obtain it—the pleasant adventure you achieved on that account, and the kind thought of making me a present of it,—all this shows how thoroughly you are penetrated with the grand primitive phenomenon which here appears thoroughly revealed. This idea—this feeling, with all its fruitfulness, will accompany you through your whole life, and will manifest itself in various productive ways. Error belongs to libraries, truth to the human mind,—books may be increased by books, while the intercourse with living primitive laws gratifies the mind that can embrace the simple, disentangle the perplexed, and enlighten the obscure.

If your Dæmon again brings you to Weimar, you shall see the image standing in a strong clear sun, where beneath the calm blue of the transparent face the thick mass of the breast and the epaulettes go through the ascending and descending scale of every shade from the strongest ruby-red. As the granite head of Memnon utters sounds, so does this glass figure produce a coloured halo. Here we see the

hero victorious even for the theory of colours. Receive my warmest thanks for this unexpected confirmation of a doctrine I have so much at heart.

With your medal, too, you have doubly and trebly enriched my cabinet. My attention has been called to a man called Dupré, an excellent sculptor, brass-founder, and medalist. He it was who modelled and cast the likeness of Henry IV. on the Pont-Neuf. Being stimulated by the medal you sent me, I looked over the rest of my collection, and found some very excellent ones of the same name, and others probably by the same hand, so that your gift has afforded me a pleasant impulse.

As for my "Metamorphosis" with Soret's translation, we have only reached the fifth sheet, and I long doubted whether I should curse or bless this undertaking, but now I again find myself forced back to the contemplation of organic nature; I am pleased, and willingly pursue my task. The maxims which I have entertained for forty years are still valid,—they serve to guide one successfully through the whole labyrinth of the comprehensible to the very limit of the incomprehensible, where, after much profit, one may reasonably stop. No philosopher of the old or new world has been able to reach any farther. One can scarcely venture to say more in writing.

J. W. VON GOETHE.

(Sup.*) Wednesday, October 13, 1830.

Goethe showed me some tables in which he had written many names of plants in the Latin and German languages, in order to learn them by heart.

He told me that he had a room which had been completely papered with such tables, and in which, whilst walking round, he had studied and learned from the walls. "It grieved me," said he, "that it was afterwards whitewashed. I had also another room, upon which were written chronological notes of my labours during a long series of years, and to which I always added the latest. This also was unfortunately whitewashed, which I regret no less, as it might now be of great service to me."

(Sup. *) Wednesday, October 20, 1830.

For a short hour with Goethe, in order to consult with him, on the part of the Grand-Duchess, concerning a silver escutcheon, which the Prince intends to present to the Cross-bow Archers Company in this town, of which he has become a member.

Our conversation soon turned upon other subjects, and Goethe begged me to give him my opinion upon the Saint-Simonians.

"The principal aim of their theory," returned I, "appears to be,—that each should work for the happiness of the whole, as a necessary condition of his own happiness."

"I think," returned Goethe, "that each ought to begin with himself, and make his own fortune first, from which the happiness of the whole will at last unquestionably follow. Altogether, this theory appears to me perfectly impracticable. It is in opposition to all nature, all experience, and all the course of events for thousands of years. If each one only does his duty as an individual, and if each one works

rightly in his own vocation, it will be well with the whole. Never, in my vocation as an author, have I asked,—what would the multitude have, and how can I be of service to the whole, but I have always endeavoured to improve myself and sharpen my own faculties, to raise the standard of my own personality, and then to express only that which I had recognised as good and true. This has certainly, as I will not deny, worked usefully in a large sphere; still, it was not my aim, but the necessary *result*, which is found in all the effects of natural powers. If, as an author, I had made the wishes of the great multitude my aim, and had endeavoured to satisfy these, I should have told them short stories, and made sport with them, like the late Kotzebue.”

“That cannot be contradicted,” returned I. “But, however, there is not merely a happiness which I enjoy as a single individual, but also one which I enjoy as a citizen and member of a great community. If one does not lay down as a principle the attainment of the greatest possible happiness for a whole people, from what basis should legislation proceed.”

“If that is what you are driving at,” said Goethe, “I have nothing to reply. But in such a case, only a very select few could make use of your principle. It would be only a receipt for princes and legislators, although it appears to me that the tendency of laws should be rather to diminish the amount of evil than to produce an amount of happiness.”

“Both,” returned I, “come pretty much to the same thing. Bad roads, for instance, appear to me a great evil. But if a prince introduce good roads into

his state down to the poorest hamlet, not only is a great evil removed, but a great good is gained for his people. Again, a tardy administration of justice is a great evil. But if a prince, by establishing a public civil mode of proceeding, affords to his people speedy justice; not merely is a great evil removed, but a great good is conferred."

"In this key," rejoined Goethe, "I would pipe quite another song. However, we leave some evils untouched that something may remain upon which mankind can further develop their powers. In the mean while, my doctrine is this,—let the father take care of his house, the artizan of his customers, and the clergy of mutual love, and the police will not disturb our joy."

During my stay at Nordheim, which I did not reach till the end of October, having stopped some time at Frankfort and Cassel, every circumstance combined to make my return to Weimar desirable.

Goethe had not approved of a speedy publication of my conversations, and hence a successful opening of a purely literary career was not to be thought of.

Then the sight of her whom I had ardently loved for many years, and the feeling of her great qualities, which was every day renewed, excited in me the desire of a speedy union, and the wish for a secure subsistence.

Under these circumstances I received a message from Weimar, by order of the Grand-Duchess, and hailed it with delight, as may be seen by the following letter to Goethe:—

Nordheim, November 6, 1830.

Man appoints, and God disappoints ; and, before we can turn about, our circumstances and our wishes have been otherwise than we anticipated.

Some weeks ago I had a certain dread of returning to Weimar, and now, as matters stand, I shall not only soon and gladly return, but I shall harbour the thought, and take up my residence there, and settle for good.

I received a few days ago a letter from Soret, with the offer of a fixed salary, on the part of the Grand-Duchess, if I will return and go on as hitherto instructing the Prince. Some other good news Soret will communicate by word of mouth ; and from all this I gather that I am kindly thought of.

I should like to write an answer in the affirmative to Soret, but I hear that he is gone to his family at Geneva, and hence I can only address your excellency with the request that you will be pleased to communicate to her imperial highness my resolution to return soon.

I hope at the same time that this intelligence will give you some pleasure, since you have so long had at heart my happiness and peace of mind.

I send you the warmest greetings from all your friends, and hope shortly to see you once more.

E.

On the afternoon of the 20th November I left Nordheim, and set off for Göttingen, which I reached at dusk.

In the evening, at the *table d'hôte*, when the landlord heard that I had come from Weimar, and was on my way back, he calmly told me that the great poet Goethe had had to undergo a severe misfortune in his old age, since, according to the papers of the day, his only son had died of paralysis, in Italy.

I passed a sleepless night. The event which affected me so nearly was constantly before my eyes. The following days and nights, which I passed on the road, and in Mühlhausen and Gotha, were no better. Being alone in the carriage, under the influence of the gloomy November days, and in desert fields, where there was no external object to distract my attention or to cheer me, I in vain endeavoured to fix my attention upon other thoughts. While among the people at the inns, I constantly heard of the mournful event which so nearly affected myself, as of one of the novelties of the day. My greatest fear was, that Goethe, at his advanced years, would not be able to surmount the violent storm of paternal feelings. And what an impression, I thought, will my own arrival make—when I departed with his son, and now come back alone. It will seem as though he has not really lost him till he sees me.

With these thoughts and feelings, I reached the last station before Weimar, on Tuesday the 23rd of November, at six o'clock in the evening. I felt, for the second time in my life, that human existence has heavy moments through which one must pass. I communed in thought with higher beings above me, when I was struck by the light of the moon, which came from amid thick clouds, and after shining

brightly for some moments was wrapped in darkness as before. Whether this was chance, or something more, I took it as a favourable omen from above, and thus received unexpected encouragement.

I just greeted the people at my residence, and then set off at once for Goethe's house. I first went to Frau von Goethe. I found her already in mourning, but calm and collected, and we had a great deal to say to each other.

Thursday, November 25, 1830.

This morning Goethe sent me some books, which had arrived as presents for me from English and German authors.

At noon I went to dine with him. I found him looking at a portfolio of engravings and drawings, which had been offered him for sale. He told me he had had the pleasure that morning of a visit from the Grand-Duchess, to whom he had mentioned my return.

Frau von Goethe joined us, and we sat down to dinner. I was obliged to give an account of my travels. I spoke of Venice, Milan, Genoa; and he seemed particularly interested about the family of the English consul there. I then spoke of Geneva; and he asked with sympathy after the Soret family, and Herr von Bonstetten. He wished for a particular description of the latter, which I gave him as well as I could.

After dinner, I was pleased that Goethe began to speak of my "Conversations."

"It must be your first work," said he; "and we

will not let it go till the whole is complete, and in order."

Still, Goethe appeared to me unusually silent to-day, and oftentimes lost in thought, which I feared was no good sign.

Tuesday, November 30, 1830.

Last Friday, we were thrown into no small anxiety. Goethe was seized with a violent hemorrhage in the night, and was near death all the day. He lost, counting the vein they opened, six pounds of blood, which is a great quantity, considering that he is eighty years old. However, the great skill of his physician, Hofrath Vogel, and his incomparable constitution, have saved him this time, so that he recovers rapidly, has once more an excellent appetite, and sleeps again all night. Nobody is admitted, and he is forbidden to speak; but his ever active mind cannot rest; he is already thinking of his work. This morning, I received from him the following note, written in bed, with a lead pencil:—

"Have the goodness, my best doctor, to look once again at the accompanying poems, with which you are familiar, and to re-arrange the others which are new, so as to adapt them to their place in the whole. 'Faust' shall presently follow.

"In hope of a happy meeting,

GOETHE.

"Weimar, 30th November, 1830.

On Goethe's complete recovery, which soon followed, he devoted his whole attention to the first act

of "Faust," and to the completion of the fourth volume of "Dichtung und Wahrheit."

He wished me to examine his short heretofore unpublished papers, and to look through his journals and letters, that we might know how to proceed with the new edition.

Examining my "Conversations" with him was at present out of the question. Besides, I thought it wiser, instead of occupying myself with what I had already written, to increase my stock with something new, while opportunity was still vouchsafed me by a kindly fate.

CONVERSATIONS OF GOETHE.

1831.

1831.

Saturday, January 1, 1831.

Of Goethe's letters to various persons, copies of which have been kept in parcels since the year 1807, I have during the last weeks carefully gone through the series of several years. I will in the following paragraphs set down some general remarks, which may be used in some future edition.

I.

In the first place, the question has arisen,—whether it is expedient to give these letters merely in the shape of extracts.

To this I reply that altogether it has been Goethe's nature to go to work with some intention even in the smallest matters, and that this seems to have been particularly the case with regard to these letters, where the author has always devoted his whole soul to the subject, so that not only is every sheet perfectly written from beginning to end, but there is not a line which does not reveal a superior nature and thorough cultivation.

It is my opinion, therefore, that the letters should

be given entire, especially as the single passages of importance often receive their true lustre and real significance only through what precedes and follows.

Then, if we look closely at the matter, and fancy these letters laid before a large and varied world, who would presume to say which passage was important and worthy of communication, and which was not? The grammarian, the biographer, the philosopher, the moralist, the man of natural science, the artist, the poet, the academician, the actor, and so on *ad infinitum*, have each of them his own peculiar interest, so that one will skip a passage which another regards as highly important, and applies to himself.

Thus, for instance, in the first series belonging to 1807, there is a letter to a friend, whose son is about to devote himself to a forest-life, and to whom Goethe prescribes the course which the young man is to adopt. A young author will probably pass over a letter of this kind, while a forester will certainly perceive with delight that the poet has looked at *his* department as well as others, and has here also tried to give good counsel.

I repeat, therefore, that I am for giving these letters just as they are, without mutilation, especially as they are already distributed entire, and we may be sure that the persons who have received them will some day print them as they have been written.

2.

If, however, there are letters which one would scruple to publish entire, but which contain good isolated passages, one may copy these passages, and either assign them to the year to which they belong,

or make of them a special collection, accordingly as it seems most expedient.

3.

It is possible that a letter may appear of no importance in the first parcel in which we find it, and that we may be against its publication. If, however, it is found that such a letter has consequences in after years, and may be regarded as the first link of an extended chain, it will be rendered important by this very circumstance, and may be classed with those fit for publication.

4.

The doubt may arise, whether it is more expedient to arrange the letters according to the persons to whom they are addressed, or to let them follow according to years, without any further order.

I am for the latter method,—first, because it will cause a beautiful and ever refreshing variety ; for, when another person is addressed, not only is there always a change in the style, but the subjects themselves are different, so that the theatre, poetical labours, natural studies, domestic affairs, communications with friends and with persons of rank, pass along in ever-varied succession.

I am also for an arrangement according to years, and without further order, because the letters of any one year, through contemporary influences, not only bear the character of that year, but show the circumstances and occupations of the writer in every direction, so that such letters would be perfectly fitted to complete, with a fresh animated detail, the sum-

mary biography of the "Tag-und - Jahres-Hefte," already printed.

5.

Letters which other persons have already printed, because, perhaps, they contain an acknowledgment of their merits, or some other commendation or peculiarity, should be again introduced in this collection, partly because they belong to the series, partly because these persons will be gratified by the proof afforded to the world that their documents were genuine.

6.

The question whether a letter of introduction shall be received into the collection or not, shall be decided after due consideration of the person recommended. If he has done nothing, and the letter contains nothing else of value, it is to be omitted; if, on the other hand, he has gained an honourable name in the world, it is to be inserted.

7.

Letters to persons who are known through Goethe's Life, such as Lavater, Jung, Behrisch, Kniep, Hackert, and others, are of themselves interesting, and should be published, even if they contain nothing of importance.

8.

We must not be too fastidious in the publication of these letters, since they give us an idea of Goethe's broad existence and varied influence in all directions; while his deportment towards persons most unlike each other, and in the most different positions, may be regarded as highly instructive.

9.

If several letters treat of the same subject, the best are to be selected; and when a certain point appears in several letters, it should be struck out in some, and left where it is best expressed.

10.

In the letters of 1811 and 1812, there are perhaps twenty places where the autograph of remarkable persons is requested. These and similar passages must not be suppressed, as they appear highly characteristic and amiable.

The preceding paragraphs have been occasioned by a survey of the letters of 1807, 1808, and 1809. Any general remarks that may occur in the further progress of the work will be added as a supplement.

E.

Weimar, January 1, 1831.

To-day, after dinner, I discussed this matter with Goethe, point by point, and he gave his assent to my suggestions. "In my will," said he, "I will appoint you editor of these papers, and thus show that we have perfectly agreed as to the method to be observed."

(Sup.*) Tuesday, January 4, 1831.

I perused, with Goethe, some books of drawings, by my friend Töpfer, of Geneva, whose talent is equally great as an author and as a draughtsman; but who, until now, appears to have liked to express his lively

conceptions in visible forms rather than in transient words. The number which contained the adventures of Doctor Festus, in light pen-and-ink sketches, gave quite the impression of a comic novel, and pleased Goethe highly. "This is mad stuff, indeed!" exclaimed he, from time to time, as he turned over one leaf after another; "all sparkles with talent and intelligence. Some pages could not be excelled. If, for the future, he would choose a less frivolous subject, and restrict himself a little, he would produce things beyond all conception."

"He has been compared with Rabelais," remarked I, "and reproached with having imitated him and borrowed his ideas."

"People do not know what they would have," returned Goethe. "I find nothing of the sort; on the contrary, Töpfer appears to me to stand quite upon his own feet, and to be as thoroughly original as any talent I have met."

(Sup.*) Wednesday, January 17, 1831.

I found Coudray with Goethe, examining some architectural drawings. I had about me a five-franc piece of 1830, with the likeness of Charles the Tenth, which I produced. Goethe joked about the pointed head. "The organ of Veneration appears to have been very largely developed in him," remarked he. "Doubtless, from his excessive piety, he did not deem it necessary to pay his debts; on the other hand, we are deeply indebted to him, since, thanks to the freaks of his genius, Europe will not soon be quiet again."

We spoke about "Rouge et Noir," which Goethe regarded as Stendhal's best work.

"Still I cannot deny," added he, "that some of his female characters are a little too romantic. Nevertheless, they all give evidence of great observation and psychological penetration, so that one may willingly pardon the author for some improbability in his details."

(Sup.*) Tuesday, January 23, 1831.

With the Prince at Goethe's. His grandchildren were amusing themselves with conjuring tricks, in which Walter is particularly skilful. "I do not object," said Goethe, "to the boys filling up their spare hours with these follies. It is, especially in the presence of a small public, an excellent means of exercise in speaking freely, and acquiring some bodily and mental activity, of which we Germans have by no means a superabundance. The slight vanity that is occasioned is a disadvantage which is certainly overbalanced by such a gain."

"Besides, the spectators take care enough to damp such feelings," remarked I, "because they generally look very sharply at the little juggler's fingers, and are malicious enough to laugh at his blunders, and to mortify him by publishing his little secrets."

"It is with them as with actors," added Goethe; "who are applauded to-day and hissed to-morrow, by which means all is kept in the right track."

Wednesday, February 9, 1831.

Yesterday I continued reading Voss's "Luise" with the Prince, and made to myself several remarks on the subject of that book. The great merits of

the author in depicting the locality, and the external circumstances of the persons, delighted me; still, it appeared to me that the poem should have had a more lofty import,—and this remark especially occurred to me in those passages where the persons express their sentiments in dialogue. In the “Vicar of Wakefield” there is also a country pastor with his family, but the poet had a higher knowledge of the world, and this was communicated to his personages, all of whom exhibit greater mental variety. In the “Luise” all stand on the level of a narrow cultivation, though there is sufficient to satisfy thoroughly a certain class of readers. As for the verse, it seems to me that the hexameter is far too pretentious for such narrow subjects, and is, moreover, often a little forced and affected, and that the periods do not always flow naturally enough to be read with ease.

To-day, at dinner, I talked over this point with Goethe. “The earlier editions of the poem,” said he, “are far better in that respect, and I remember that I read it aloud with pleasure. Afterwards Voss touched it up a great deal, and, from his technical crotchets, spoiled the ease and nature of the verse. Indeed, now-a-days technicalities are everything, and the critics begin to torment themselves,—whether in a rhyme an S should be followed by an S, and not an S by a ‘double S.’ If I were young and bold enough, I would purposely offend against all these technical whims; I would employ alliteration, assonance, false rhyme, and anything else that came into my head, but I would keep the main point in view, and endeavour

to say such good things that every one would be tempted to read them and to learn them by heart."

Friday, February 11, 1831.

To-day, at dinner, Goethe told me that he had begun the fourth act of "Faust," and thus intended to proceed, which pleased me highly. He then spoke with great praise of Carl Schöne, a young philologist of Leipsic, who had written a work on the costume in the tragedies of Euripides, and who, notwithstanding his great learning, had displayed no more of it than was necessary for his purpose.

"I like to see," said Goethe, "how, with a productive sense, he goes to the point at once, while other modern philologists give themselves far too much trouble about technicalities, and long and short syllables."

"It is always a sign that a time is unproductive when it goes so much into technical minutiae; and thus also it is a sign that an individual is unproductive when he occupies himself in a like manner."

"Then there are other faults which act as impediments. Thus, for instance, in Count Platen there are nearly all the chief requisites of a good poet;—imagination, invention, intellect, and productiveness, he possesses in a high degree; he also shows a thoroughly technical cultivation, and a study and earnestness, to be found in few others. With him, however, his unhappy polemical tendency is a hindrance."

"That amid the grandeur of Naples and Rome he could not forget the miserable trivialities of German literature, is unpardonable in so eminent a talent."

The 'Romantic *Œdipus*' shows that, especially with regard to technicalities, Platen was just the man to write the best German tragedy; but now, in this piece, he has used the tragic *motives* for purposes of parody, how will he write a tragedy in good earnest?

X "And then (what is not enough kept in mind) these quarrels occupy the thoughts; the images of our foes are like ghosts which intercept all free production, and cause great disorder in a nature already sufficiently susceptible.

Lord Byron was ruined by his polemic tendency; and Platen should, for the honour of German literature, quit for ever so unprofitable a path."

Saturday, February 12, 1831.

I have been reading the New Testament, and thinking of a picture which Goethe lately showed me, where Christ is walking on the water, and Peter coming towards him, on the waves, begins to sink, in a moment of faint-heartedness.

"This," said Goethe, "is one of the most beautiful legends, and one which I love better than any. It expresses the noble doctrine that man, through faith and hearty courage, will come off victor in the most difficult enterprises, while he may be ruined by the least paroxysm of doubt."

Sunday, February 13, 1831.

Dined with Goethe. He told me that he was going on with the fourth act of "Faust," and had succeeded to his wish in the beginning.

"I had," said he, "long since the *what*, as you know, but was not quite satisfied about the *how*; hence it is the more pleasant that good thoughts have come to me.

"I will now go on inventing, to supply the whole gap, from the 'Helena' to the fifth act, which is finished, and write down a detailed plan, that I may work with perfect comfort and security on those parts which first attract me.

"This act acquires quite a peculiar character, so that, like an independent little world, it does not touch the rest, and is only connected with the whole by a slight reference to what precedes and follows."

"It will then," said I, "be perfectly in character with the rest; for, in fact, Auerbach's cellar, the witches' kitchen, the Blocksberg, the imperial diet, the masquerade, the paper-money, the laboratory, the classic Walpurgis-night, the Helena, are all of them little independent worlds, which, each being complete in itself, do indeed work upon each other, yet come but little in contact. The great point with the poet is to express a manifold world, and he uses the story of a celebrated hero merely as a sort of thread on which he may string what he pleases. This is the case with 'Gil Blas' and the 'Odyssey.'"

"You are perfectly right," said Goethe; "and the only matter of importance in such compositions is, that the single masses should be clear and significant, while the whole always remains incommensurable,—and even on that account, like an unsolved problem, constantly lures mankind to study it again and again."

I then spoke of a letter from a young soldier, whom I and other friends had advised to go into foreign service, and who now, not being pleased with his situation abroad, blames all those who advised him."

"Advice is a strange matter," said Goethe, "and when one has looked about one in the world long enough, to see how the most judicious enterprises fail, and the most absurd often succeed, one becomes disinclined to give advice to any one. At bottom, too, there is a confinement with respect to him who asks advice, and a presumption in him who gives it. A person should only give advice in matters where he himself will co-operate. If any one asks me for good advice, I say I am ready to give it, but only on condition that he will promise me not to take it."

The conversation turned on the New Testament, and I mentioned that I had been reading again the passage where Christ walks on the sea, and Peter meets him.

"When one has not for some time read the Evangelists," said I, "one is always astonished at the moral grandeur of the figures. We find in the lofty demands made upon our moral power of will a sort of categorical imperative."

"Especially," said Goethe, "you find the categorical imperative of faith, which, indeed, Mahomet carried still farther."

"Altogether," said I, "the Evangelists, if you look closely into them, are full of differences and contradictions; and the books must have gone through strange revolutions of destiny before they were brought together in the form in which we have them now."

“It is like trying to drink out a sea,” said Goethe, “to enter into an historical and critical examination of them. It is the best way, without farther ado, to adhere to that which is set down, and to appropriate to oneself so much as one can use for one’s moral strengthening and culture. However, it is pleasant to get a clear notion of the localities, and I can recommend to you nothing better than Röhr’s admirable book on Palestine. The late Grand-Duke was so pleased with this book, that he bought it twice, giving the first copy to the library, after he had read it, and keeping the other always by him.”

I wondered that the Grand-Duke should take an interest in such matters.

“Therein,” said Goethe, “he was great. He was interested in everything of any importance, in whatsoever department it lay. He was always progressive, and sought to domesticate with himself all the good inventions and institutions of his time. If anything failed, he spoke of it no more. I often thought how I should excuse to him this or that failure; but he always ignored it in the cheerfulest way, and was immediately engaged with some new plan. This was a greatness peculiar to his own nature; not acquired, but innate.”

We looked, after dinner, at some engravings after the most modern artists, especially in the landscape department, and we remarked with pleasure that nothing false could be detected.

“For ages there has been so much good in the world,” said Goethe, “that one ought not in reason to wonder when it operates and produces good in its turn.”

"The worst of it is," said I, "that there are so many false doctrines, and that a young talent does not know to what saint he should devote himself."

"Of this we have proofs," said Goethe; "we have seen whole generations ruined or injured by false maxims, and have also suffered ourselves. Then there is the facility now-a-days of universally diffusing every error by means of printing. Though a critic may think better after some years, and diffuse among the public his better convictions, his false doctrine has operated in the mean while, and will in future, like a spreading weed, continue to co-operate with what is good. My only consolation is, that a really great talent is not to be led astray or spoiled."

We looked further at the engravings. "These are really good things," said Goethe. "You have before you the works of very fair talents, who have learned something, and have acquired no little taste and art. Still, something is wanting in all these pictures—the *Manly*. Take notice of this word, and underscore it. The pictures lack a certain urgent power, which in former ages was generally expressed, but in which the present age is deficient, and that with respect not only to painting, but to all the other arts. We have a more weakly race, of which we cannot say whether it is so by its origin, or by a more weakly training and diet."

"We see here," said I, "how much in art depends on a great personality,* which indeed was common

* "Personality," which is used here and elsewhere as an equivalent for "personalität," is not a common expression, but its meaning will be obvious.—*Trans.*

enough in earlier ages. When, at Venice, we stand before the works of Titian and Paul Veronese, we feel the powerful mind of these men, both in their first conception of the subject, and in the final execution. Their great energetic feeling has penetrated the members of the whole picture, and this higher power of the artist's personality expands our own nature, and elevates us above ourselves, when we contemplate such works. This manly mind of which you speak is also to be found especially in the landscapes of Rubens. They, indeed, consist merely of trees, soil, water, rocks, and clouds, but his own bold temperament has penetrated into the forms, and thus while we see familiar nature we see it penetrated by the power of the artist, and reproduced according to his views."

"Certainly," said Goethe, "personality is everything in art and poetry; nevertheless, there are many weak personages among the modern critics who do not admit this, but look upon a great personality in a work of poetry or art merely as a kind of trifling appendage."

"However, to feel and respect a great personality one must be something oneself. All those who denied the sublime to Euripides, were either poor wretches incapable of comprehending such sublimity, or shameless charlatans, who, by their presumption, wished to make more of themselves, and really did make more of themselves than they were."

Monday, February 14, 1831.

Dined with Goethe. He had been reading the memoirs of General Rapp, through which the conversation turned upon Napoleon, and the feelings which

must necessarily have been experienced by Madame Letitia at finding herself the mother of so powerful a family. She had given birth to Napoleon, her second son, when she was eighteen years old, and her husband three-and-twenty, so that he had a physical advantage in the youthful strength of his parents. After him she bore three sons, all remarkably endowed, clever and energetic in practical things, and all with a certain poetical talent. These four sons are followed by three daughters, and last of all comes Jerome, who seems to have been the least endowed of all.

Talent is indeed not hereditary, but it requires an apt physical substratum, and then it is by no means indifferent whether one is the first or the last born, nor whether one is the issue of strong and young, or weak and old parents.

“It is remarkable,” said I, “that, of all talents, the musical shows itself earliest; so that Mozart in his fifth, Beethoven in his eighth, and Hummel in his ninth year, astonished all near them by their performance and compositions.”

“The musical talent,” said Goethe, “may well show itself earliest of any; for music is something innate and internal, which needs little nourishment from without, and no experience drawn from life. Really, however, a phenomenon like that of Mozart remains an inexplicable prodigy. But how would the Divinity find every where opportunity to do wonders, if he did not sometimes try his powers on extraordinary individuals, at whom we stand astonished, and cannot understand whence they come?”

Tuesday, February 15, 1831.

Dined with Goethe. I told him about the theatre; he praised the piece given yesterday—"Henry III.," by Dumas—as very excellent, but naturally found that such a dish would not suit the public.

"I should not," said he, "have ventured to give it, when I was director; for I remember well what trouble we had to smuggle upon the public the 'Constant Prince,'* which has far more general human interest, is more poetic, and in fact lies much nearer to us, than 'Henry III.'"

I spoke of the "Grand Cophta," which I had been lately re-perusing. I talked over the scenes one by one, and, at last, expressed a wish to see it once on the stage.

"I am pleased," said Goethe, "that you like that piece, and find out what I have worked into it. It was indeed no little labour to make an entirely real fact first poetical, and then theatrical. And yet you will grant that the whole is properly conceived for the stage. Schiller was, also, very partial to it; and we gave it once, with brilliant effect, for the higher order of persons. But it is not for the public in general; the crimes of which it treats have about them an *apprehensive* character, which produces an uncomfortable feeling in the people. Its bold character places it, indeed, in the sphere of 'Clara Gazul;' and the French poet might really envy me for taking from him so good a subject. I say *so good a subject*, because it is in truth not merely of moral, but also of great

* "Il Principe Constante," by Calderon.—*Trans.*

historical significance ; the fact immediately preceded the French Revolution, and was, to a certain extent, its foundation. The Queen, through being implicated in that unlucky story of the necklace, lost her dignity, and was no longer respected, so that she lost, in the eyes of the people, the ground where she was unassailable. Hate injures no one ; it is contempt that casts men down. Kotzebue had been hated long ; but before the student dared to use his dagger upon him, it was necessary for certain journals to make him contemptible."

Thursday, February 17, 1831.

Dined with Goethe. I brought him his "Residence at Carlsbad," for the year 1807, which I had finished revising that morning. We spoke of wise passages, which occur there as hasty remarks of the day.

"People always fancy," said Goethe, laughing, "that we must become old to become wise ; but, in truth, as years advance, it is hard to keep ourselves as wise as we were. Man becomes, indeed, in the different stages of his life, a different being ; but he cannot say that he is a better one, and, in certain matters, he is as likely to be right in his twentieth, as in his sixtieth year.

"We see the world one way from a plain, another way from the heights of a promontory, another from the glacier fields of the primary mountains. We see, from one of these points, a larger piece of world than from the other ; but that is all, and we cannot say that we see more truly from any one than from the rest. When a writer leaves monuments on the different steps of his life, it is chiefly important that he should have

an innate foundation and good-will ; that he should, at each step, have seen and felt clearly, and that, without any secondary aims, he should have said distinctly and truly what has passed in his mind. Then will his writings, if they were right at the step where they originated, remain always right, however the writer may develop or alter himself in after times."

I heartily assented to this excellent remark.

"Lately," continued Goethe, "I found a piece of waste paper which I read. 'Humph,' said I to myself, 'what is written there is not so bad ; you do not think otherwise, and would not have expressed yourself very differently.' But when I looked closely at the leaf, it was a fragment from my own works. For, as I am always striving onwards, I forget what I have written, and soon regard my productions as something quite foreign."

I asked about "Faust," and what progress he had made with it.

"That," said Goethe, "will not again let me loose. I daily think and invent more and more of it. I have now had the whole manuscript of the second part stitched together, that it may lie a palpable mass before me. The place of the yet wanting fourth act I have filled with white paper ; and, undoubtedly, what is finished will allure and urge me to complete what has yet to be done. There is more than people think in these matters of sense, and we must aid the spiritual by all manner of devices."

He sent for the stitched "Faust," and I was surprised to see how much he had written ; for a good folio volume was before me.

“And all,” said I, “has been done in the six years that I have been here; and yet, amid so many other occupations, you could have devoted but little time to it. We see how much a work grows, even if we only now and then add something!”

“Of that one is still more convinced as one grows older,” said Goethe; “while youth believes all must be done in a single day. If fortune favour, and I continue in good health, I hope in the next spring-months to get a great way on with the fourth act. It was, as you know, long since invented; but the other parts have, in the course of the execution, grown so much, that I can now use only the outline of my first invention, and must fill out this introduced portion so as to make it of a piece with the rest.”

“A far richer world is displayed,” said I, “in this second part than in the first.”

“I should think so,” said Goethe. “The first part is almost entirely subjective; it proceeded entirely from a perplexed, impassioned individual, and his semi-darkness is probably highly pleasing to mankind. But, in the second part, there is scarcely any thing of the subjective; here is seen a higher, broader, clearer, more passionless world, and he who has not looked about him and had some experience, will not know what to make of it.”

“There will be found exercise for thought,” said I; “some learning may also be needful. I am glad that I have read Schelling’s little book on the Cabiri, and that I now know the drift of that famous passage in the Walpurgis-night.”

“ I have always found,” said Goethe, laughing, “ that it is well to know something.”

Friday, February 18, 1831.

Dined with Goethe. We talked of different forms of government ; and it was remarked what difficulties an excess of liberalism presents, inasmuch as it calls forth the demands of individuals, and, from the quantity of wishes, one does not know which to satisfy. It will be found that one cannot succeed in the long run with over-great goodness, mildness, and moral delicacy, while one has beneath a mixed and sometimes vicious world to manage and hold in respect.

It was also remarked that the art of governing is a great *metier*, requiring the whole man, and that it is therefore not well for a ruler to have too strong tendencies for other affairs, as, for instance, a predominant inclination for the fine arts ; since thus not only the interest of the Prince, but also the powers of the State must be withdrawn from more necessary matters. A predominating love for the fine arts better suits rich private persons.

Goethe told me that his “ Metamorphosis of Plants,” with Soret’s translation, was going on well, and that, in his supplementary labours on these subjects, particularly on the “ Spiral,” quite unexpected favourable things had come to his aid from without.

“ We have,” said he, “ as you know, been busy with this translation for more than a year ; a thousand hindrances have come in our way ; the enterprise has often come to an absolute stand-still, and I have often

cursed it in silence. But now I can do reverence to all these hindrances; for during these delays things have ripened abroad among other excellent men, so that they now bring the best grist to my mill, advance me beyond all conception, and will bring my work to a conclusion which I could not have imagined a year ago. The like has often happened to me in life; and, in such cases, one is led to believe in a higher influence, in something *dæmonic* (*dämonisch*), which we adore without trying to explain it further."

Saturday, February 19, 1831.

Dined at Goethe's, with Hofrath Vogel. A pamphlet on the island of Heligoland had been sent to Goethe, which he read with great interest, telling us what he found most important in it.

After we had talked about this very peculiar locality, conversation took a medical turn, and Vogel told us, as the news of the day, how the natural small-pox, in defiance of all inoculation, had again broken out in Eisenach, and had carried off many in a short time.

"Nature," said Vogel, "plays us a trick every now and then; and we must watch her very closely, if our theory is to keep pace with her. Inoculation was thought so sure and infallible, that a law was made to enforce it. But now this Eisenach affair, where the persons who have been inoculated are nevertheless attacked by the natural small pox, casts a suspicion on the infallibility of the remedy, and weakens the motive for observing the law."

"Nevertheless," said Goethe, "I am against any departure from the strict law for inoculation, since

these trifling exceptions are nothing in comparison with the great benefits which it confers."

"I am of the same opinion," said Vogel, "and would even maintain that in all cases where the natural disease is not prevented by the artificial one, the inoculation has been imperfect. For inoculation to have a protective power it must be strong enough to produce fever. Mere irritation of the skin without fever will not suffice. I have this day proposed in council that a stronger inoculation for the small pox shall be incumbent on all the parties throughout the country who have to perform it."

"I hope that your proposal has been carried," said Goethe. "Indeed I am always for a rigid adherence to a law, especially at a time like ours, when out of weakness and excessive liberality one is always conceding too much."

It was then remarked that we were beginning to be too gentle and lax with regard to the responsibility of criminals, and that medical testimony and opinion often had the effect of making the criminal evade the penalty he had incurred. On this occasion Vogel praised a young physician, who had always shown strength of character in such cases, and who lately, when the court was in doubt whether a certain infanticide was responsible or not, had given his testimony that she unquestionably was so.

Sunday, February 20, 1831.

Dined with Goethe. He told me that he had tested my observation on the blue shadows in the snow, viz. that they were produced by the reflection of the blue sky, and that he acknowledged its correctness. "But

both causes may, however, co-operate." said he, "and the demand (*Forderung*) excited by the yellowish light may strengthen the appearance of the blue." This I willingly conceded, and rejoiced that Goethe at last agreed with me.

"I am sorry," said I, "that I did not on the spot write down the observations on colour which I made at Mont Rosa and Mont Blanc. The chief result, however, was, that at a distance of from eighteen to twenty miles, in the brightest noonday sun, the snow appeared yellow and even reddish, while the dark parts of the mountains, which were free from snow, stood out in the most decided blue. This phenomenon did not surprise me, as I could have predicted that the semi-transparent mass which intervened would give a deep yellow tone to the white snow as it reflected the noonday sun; but, nevertheless, it pleased me, inasmuch as it fully confuted the erroneous opinion of some scientific persons, that the air has the property of giving a blue colour. For if the air had been blue of itself, the snow, for a space of twenty miles—that is to say, the distance between me and Mont Rosa—must have appeared bright blue, or a whitish blue, and not yellow and a yellowish red."

"This observation," said Goethe, "is important, and completely confutes every error."

"In fact," said I, "the doctrine of the dense medium is so simple that one is easily misled into the belief that it can be communicated to another in a few days. The difficulty is to apply the law, and to recognise a primitive phenomenon in phenomena that are conditioned and concealed a thousand different ways."

“I would compare it to whist,” said Goethe, “the laws and rules of which are very easy to teach, but which one must have played a long time before one can become a master. Altogether we learn nothing from mere hearing, and he who does not take an active part in certain subjects knows them but half and superficially.”

Goethe then told me of the book of a young natural philosopher, which he could not help praising, on account of the clearness of his descriptions, while he pardoned him for his teleological tendency.

“It is natural to man,” said Goethe, “to regard himself as the final cause of creation, and to consider all other things merely in relation to himself so far as they are of use to him. He makes himself master of the vegetable and animal world, and while he claims other creatures as a fitting diet, he acknowledges his God, and praises His goodness in this paternal care. He takes milk from the cow, honey from the bee, wool from the sheep; and while he gives these things a purpose which is useful to himself, he believes that they were made on that account. Nay, he cannot conceive that even the smallest herb was not made for him, and if he has not yet ascertained its utility, he believes that he may discover it in future.

“Then, too, as man thinks in general, so does he always think in particular, and he does not fail to transfer his ordinary views from life into science, and to ask the use and purpose of every single part of our organic being.

“This may do for a time, and he may get on so for a time in science, but he will soon come to phenomena,

where this small view will not be sufficient, and where, if he does not take a higher stand, he will soon be involved in mere contradictions.

“The utility-teachers say that oxen have horns to defend themselves; but I ask, why is the sheep without any—and when it has them, why are they twisted about the ears so as to answer no purpose at all?

“If, on the other hand, I say the ox defends himself with his horns because he has them, it is quite a different matter.

“The question as to the purpose—the question *Wherefore* is completely unscientific. But we get on farther with the question *How*? For if I ask *how* has the ox horns, I am led to study his organization, and learn at the same time why the lion has no horns, and cannot have any.

“Thus, man has in his skull two hollows which are never filled up. The question *wherefore* could not take us far in this case, but the question *how* informs me that these hollows are remains of the animal skull, which are found on a larger scale in inferior organization, and are not quite obliterated in man, with all his eminence.

“The teachers of utility would think that they lost their God if they did not worship Him who gave the ox horns to defend itself. But I hope I may be allowed to worship Him who, in the abundance of His creation, was great enough, after making a thousand kinds of plants, to make one more, in which all the rest should be comprised; and after a thousand kinds of animals, a being which comprises them all—man.

“Let people serve Him who gives to the beast his

fodder, and to man meat and drink as much as he can enjoy. But I worship Him who has infused into the world such a power of production, that, when only the millionth part of it comes out into life, the world swarms with creatures to such a degree that war, pestilence, fire, and water cannot prevail against them. That is *my* God !”

Monday, February 21, 1831.

Goethe praised Schelling's last discourse, with which he had calmed the students at Munich.

“It is thoroughly good,” said he ; “and we rejoice once again at the distinguished talent which we have long known and revered. In this case he had an excellent subject and a worthy purpose, and his success has been as great as possible. If the same could be said of the subject and purpose of his work on the Cabiri, that would claim praise from us also, since there also he has displayed in it his rhetorical talent and art.”

Schelling's “Cabiri” brought the conversation to the classic Walpurgis-night, and the difference between this and the scenes on the Brocken in the first part.

“The old Walpurgis-night,” said Goethe, “is monarchical, since the devil is there respected throughout as a decided chief. But the classic Walpurgis-night is thoroughly republican ; since all stand on a plain near one another, so that each is as prominent as his associates, and nobody is subordinate or troubled about the rest.”

“Moreover,” said I, “in the classic assembly all are sharply outlined individualities, while, on the German Blocksberg, each individuality is lost in the general witch-mass.”

“Therefore,” said Goethe, “Mephistophiles knows what is meant when the Homunculus speaks to him of *Thessalian* witches. A connoisseur of antiquity will have something suggested by these words (Thessalian witches), while to the unlearned it remains a mere name.”

“Antiquity,” said I, “must be very living to you, else you could not make all these figures step so freshly into life, and treat them with such freedom as you have.”

“Without a life-long occupation with plastic art,” said Goethe, “it would not have been possible to me. The difficulty was in observing due moderation amid such plenty, and avoiding all figures that did not perfectly fit into my plan. I made, for instance, no use of the Minotaur, the Harpies, and certain other monsters.”

“But what you have exhibited in that night,” said I, “is so grouped, and fits so well together, that it can be easily recalled by the imagination and made into a picture. The painters will certainly not allow such good subjects to escape them; and I especially hope to see Mephistophiles among the Phorcyades, when he tries the famous mask in profile.”

“There are a few pleasantries there,” said Goethe, “which will more or less occupy the world in all sorts of ways. Suppose the French are the first to perceive ‘*Helena*,’ and to see what can be done with it for the stage. They will spoil the piece as it is, but they will make a wise use of it for their own purposes, and that is all we can expect or desire. To Phorcyas they will certainly add a chorus of monsters, as is indeed already indicated in one passage.”

“It would be a great matter,” said I, “if a clever part of the romantic school treated the piece as an opera throughout, and Rossini collected all his great talent for a grand composition, to produce an effect with the ‘Helena.’ It affords opportunities for magnificent scenes, surprising transformations, brilliant costumes and charming ballets, which are not easily to be found elsewhere, to say nothing of the fact that this abundance of sensible material rests on the foundation of an ingenious fable that could scarcely be excelled.”

“We will wait for what the gods bring us,” said Goethe, “such things are not to be hurried. The great matter is for people to enter into it, and for managers, poets, and composers to see their advantage in it.”

Tuesday, February 22, 1831.

Upper-Consistorial Counsellor Schwabe met me in the street. I walked with him a little way; he told me of his manifold occupations, and thus I was enabled to look into the important sphere of action of this distinguished man. He said that he employed his spare hours in editing a little volume of new sermons; that one of his school-books had lately been translated into Danish, that forty thousand copies of it had been sold, and that it had been introduced into the best schools of Prussia. He begged me to visit him, which I gladly promised to do.

At dinner with Goethe, I spoke of Schwabe, and Goethe agreed entirely with my praises of him.

“The Grand-Duchess,” said he, “values him highly; and, indeed, she always knows what people

are worth. I shall have him drawn for my collection of portraits, and you will do well to visit him, and ask his permission in this respect.

“ Visit him, and show sympathy in what he is doing and planning. It will be interesting for you to observe a peculiar sphere of action, which cannot be rightly understood without a closer intercourse with such a man.”

Wednesday, February 23, 1831.

Before dinner, while walking in the Erfurt road, I met Goethe, who stopped me and took me into his carriage. We went a good way by the fir-wood, and talked about natural history.

The mountains and hills were covered with snow, and I mentioned the great delicacy of the yellow, observing that at a distance of nine miles, with some density intervening, a dark surface rather appeared blue than a white one yellow. Goethe agreed with me, and we then spoke of the high significance of the primitive phenomena, behind which we believe the Deity may directly be discerned.

“ I ask not,” said Goethe, “ whether this highest Being has reason and understanding, but I feel that He is Reason, is Understanding itself. Therewith are all creatures penetrated ; and man has so much of it that he can recognise parts of the Highest.”

At table, the efforts of certain inquirers into nature were mentioned, who, to penetrate the organic world, would ascend through mineralogy.

“ This,” said Goethe, “ is a great mistake. In the mineralogical world the simplest, in the organic world the most complex, is the most excellent. We

see, too, that these two worlds have quite different tendencies, and that a stepwise progress from one to the other is by no means to be found."

I treasured this remark as of great importance.

Thursday, February 24, 1831.

I read Goethe's essay on Zahn in the Viennese Jahrbücher, and was filled with admiration when I thought of the premises which the writing of it presupposed.

At dinner Goethe told me that Soret had been with him, and that they had made good progress with the translation of the Metamorphosis.

"The difficulty in nature," said Goethe, "is to see the law where it is concealed from us, and not to be misled by phenomena which contradict our senses. For in nature there is much which contradicts our senses, and is nevertheless true. That the sun stands still, that he does not rise and set, but that the earth performs a diurnal revolution with incredible swiftness, contradicts the senses as much as anything, but yet no well-informed person doubts that this is the case. Thus, too, there are in the vegetable kingdom contradictory phenomena, with which we must be very careful not to be led into false ways."

Saturday, February 26, 1831.

To-day I read a great deal of Goethe's "Theory of Colours," and was pleased to find that, by frequently exercising myself on the phenomena, I had become sufficiently master of the work to feel its great merits with some degree of clearness. I thought, with

admiration, what it must have cost to put such a work together, since I observed not merely the final results, but looked deeper, and saw what must have been gone through that these firm results might be attained.

Only a man of great moral power could accomplish this, and whoever would imitate him must take a very high position. All that is indelicate, untrue, egotistical, must vanish from the mind, or real true nature must scorn him. If men considered this, they would willingly devote some years of their life to master the sphere of such a science in such a manner, that they might thus test their senses, intellect, and character. They would have respect for all that is according to law, and approach the Deity as closely as it is possible for a terrestrial mind.

On the contrary, people occupy themselves too much with poetry, and supersensuous mysteries, which are subjective, pliable things, making no further claims on man, but flattering him, and, at best, leaving him just where he was.

In poetry, only the really great and pure advances us ; and this exists as a second nature, either elevating us to itself or rejecting us. On the other hand, defective poetry developes our faults, inasmuch as we take into ourselves the infectious weaknesses of the poet. Yes, take them in, without knowing it, because we cannot perceive a defect in that which is consonant to our nature.

To draw advantage from both the good and the bad in poetry, we must already be in a very high position, and have such a foundation that we can regard things of the sort as objects external to ourselves.

Hence I commend an intercourse with nature, who in no wise favours our weaknesses, but either makes something out of us, or will have nothing at all to do with us.

Monday, February 28, 1831.

I have been occupied all day with the manuscript of the fourth volume of Goethe's life, which he sent me yesterday, that I might see if anything remained to be done. I am very happy with this work, when I reflect what it already is, and what it may become. Some books appear quite complete, and leave nothing to desire. In others, on the contrary, a certain want of congruity may be observed, which may have arisen from the fact that the author has worked at very different epochs.

This fourth volume is altogether very different from the three preceding. Those constantly proceed in a certain given direction, while the course is through many years. In this volume, on the contrary, time seems scarcely to move, and we can see no decisive effort on the part of the principal character; much is undertaken but not completed, much is willed but otherwise directed, and thus we everywhere feel the influence of a secret power, a kind of destiny, drawing out many threads for the web which future years must complete.

This volume, therefore, affords a suitable occasion to speak of that secret, problematical power, which all men feel, which no philosopher explains, and over which the religious help themselves with consoling words.

Goethe names this unspeakable world and life-

enigma the Dæmonic (*dämonisch*); and, while he defines its nature, we feel that so it is, and the curtains seem to have been drawn away from before certain backgrounds of our life. We seem to see further and more clearly, but soon perceive that the object is too great and manifold, and that our eyes only reach a certain limit.

Man is born only for the little; only what is known to him can be comprehended by him, or give him pleasure. A great connoisseur understands a picture; he knows how to combine the various particulars into the Universal, which is familiar to him; the whole is, to him, as living as the details. Neither does he entertain a predilection for detached portions; he asks not whether a face is ugly or beautiful, whether a passage is light or dark, but whether everything is in its place, according to law and order. But if we show an ignorant man a picture of some compass, we shall see that, as a *whole*, it leaves him unmoved or confused; that some parts attract, others repel him; and that he at last abides by little things which are familiar to him, praising, perhaps, the good execution of a helmet or plume.

But, in fact, we men play more or less the part of this ignorant person before the great destiny-picture of the world. The lighted part, the Agreeable, attracts us, the shadowy and unpleasant parts repel us, the whole confuses us, and we vainly seek the idea of a single Being to whom we attribute such contradictions.

Now, in human things, one may indeed become a great connoisseur, inasmuch as one may appropriate to

oneself the art and knowledge of a master, but, in divine things, this is only possible with a being equal to the Highest. Nay, if the Supreme Being attempted to reveal such mysteries to us, we should not understand them or know what to do with them ; but again resemble that *ignoramus* before the picture, to whom the connoisseur cannot by all the talking in the world impart the premises on which he judges. On this account it is quite right that forms of religion have not been given directly by God himself, but, as the work of eminent men, have been conformed to the wants and the understanding of a great mass of their fellows. If they were the work of God, no man could understand them ; but, being the work of men, they do not express the Inscrutable.

The religion of the highly-cultivated ancient Greeks went no further than to give separate expressions of the Inscrutable by particular Deities. As these individualities were only limited beings, and a gap was obvious in the connection of the whole, they invented the idea of a Fate, which they placed over all ; but as this in its turn remained a many-sided Inscrutable, the difficulty was rather set aside than disposed of.

Christ thought of a God, comprising all in one, to whom he ascribed all qualities which he found excellent in himself. This God was the essence of his own beautiful soul ; full of love and goodness, like himself ; and every way suited to induce good men to give themselves up trustingly to him, and to receive this Idea, as the sweetest connection with a higher sphere. But, as the great Being whom we name the Deity manifests himself not only in man, but in a

rich, powerful nature, and in mighty world-events, a representation of him, framed from human qualities, cannot of course be adequate, and the attentive observer will soon come to imperfections and contradictions, which will drive him to doubt, nay, to despair, unless he be either little enough to let himself be soothed by an artful evasion, or great enough to rise to a higher point of view.

Such a point Goethe early found in Spinoza ; and he acknowledges with joy how much the views of that great thinker answered the wants of his youth. In him he found himself, and in him therefore could he fortify himself to the best advantage.

And as these views were not of the subjective sort, but had a foundation in the works and manifestations of God through the world, so were they not mere husks which he, after his own later, deeper search into the world and nature, threw aside as useless, but were the first root and germ of a plant that went on growing with equally healthy energy for many years, and at last unfolded the flower of a rich knowledge.

His opponents have often accused him of having no faith ; but he merely had not theirs, because it was too small for him. If he spoke out his own, they would be astonished ; but they would not be able to comprehend him.

But Goethe is far from believing that he knows the Highest Being as it is. All his written and oral expressions intimate that it is somewhat inscrutable, of which men can only have approximating perceptions and feelings.

For the rest, nature and we men are all so pene-

trated by the Divine, that it holds us ; that we live, move, and have our being in it ; that we suffer and are happy under eternal laws ; that we practise these, and they are practised on us, whether we recognize them or not.

The child enjoys his cake without knowing anything of the baker ; the sparrow the cherries, without thinking how they grew.

Wednesday, March 2, 1831.

I dined with Goethe to-day, and the conversation soon turning again on the Dæmonic, he added the following remarks to define it more closely.

"The Dæmonic," said he, "is that which cannot be explained by Reason or Understanding ; it lies not in my nature, but I am subject to it."

"Napoleon," said I, "seems to have been of the dæmonic sort."

"He was so thoroughly," said Goethe, "and in the highest degree, so that scarce any one is to be compared with him. Our late Grand-Duke, too, was a dæmonic nature, full of unlimited power of action and unrest, so that his own dominion was too little for him, and the greatest would have been too little. Dæmonic beings of such sort the Greeks reckoned among their demigods."

"Is not the Dæmonic," said I, "perceptible in events also?"

"Particularly," said Goethe, "and, indeed, in all which we cannot explain by Reason and Understanding. It manifests itself in the most varied manner throughout all nature—in the invisible as in the visible.

Many creatures are of a purely dæmonic kind ; in many parts of it are effective."

"Has not Mephistophiles," said I, "dæmonic traits, too?"

"No," said Goethe, "Mephistophiles is much too negative a being. The Dæmonic manifests itself in a thoroughly active power.

"Among artists," he continued, "it is found more among musicians—less among painters. In Paganini, it shows itself in a high degree ; and it is thus he produces such great effects."

I was much pleased at all these remarks, which made more clear to me what Goethe meant by the Dæmonic.

Thursday, March 3, 1831.

At noon with Goethe. He was looking through some architectural designs, and observed it required some courage to build palaces, inasmuch as we are never certain how long one stone will remain upon another.

"Those are most fortunate," said he, "who live in tents, or who, like some Englishmen, are always going from one city and one inn to another, and find everywhere a good table ready."

Sunday, March 6, 1831.

At dinner talked on various subjects with Goethe. We spoke of children and their naughty tricks, and he compared these to the stem-leaves of a plant, which fall away gradually of their own accord ; and which need not be corrected with great severity.

"Man," said he, "has various stages which he must go through, and each brings with it its peculiar

virtues and faults, which, in the epoch to which they belong, are to be considered natural, and in a manner right. On the next step he is another man ; there is no trace left of the earlier virtues or faults ; but others have taken their place. And so on to the final transformation, with respect to which we know not what we shall be."

After dinner, Goethe read me fragments, which he had kept from 1775, of *Hanswursts Hochzeit* ("Hanswurst's wedding"). Kilian Brustfleck opens the piece with a monologue, in which he complains that Hanswurst's education, despite all his care, has come to no good. This scene, and all the rest, were written in the tone of Faust. A productive force, powerful even to wantonness, displayed itself in every line ; and I could not but lament that it went so far beyond all bounds, that even the fragments cannot be communicated.

Goethe read me the list of the *dramatis personæ*, which nearly filled three pages, and were about a hundred in number. There were all the nicknames imaginable ; some of them so comic and ludicrous, that we could not help laughing at them. Many referred to bodily defects, and distinguished a figure so that it came like life before the eye ; others indicated the most various follies and vices, and afforded a deep look into the breadth of the immoral world. Had the piece been finished, people must have admired the invention that could combine such various symbolical figures in one single action.

"It was not to be imagined that I could finish the piece," said Goethe ; "for it demanded a high degree

of wanton dariug, which I had at moments, but which did not in fact lie in the serious tenor of my nature, and on which I could not depend. Then in Germany our circles are too limited for one to come forward with such an undertaking. On a broad ground, like Paris, one might venture such eccentricities, just as one can there be a Beranger, which would be quite impossible at Frankfort or Weimar."

Tuesday, March 8, 1831.

Dined to-day with Goethe, who began by telling me that he had been reading "Ivanhoe."

"Walter Scott," said he, "is a great talent; he has not his equal; and we need not wonder at the extraordinary effect he produces on the whole reading world. He gives me much to think of; and I discover in him a wholly new art, with laws of its own."

We spoke then of the fourth volume of the biography, and came upon the subject of the Dæmonic before we were aware.

"In poetry," said Goethe, "especially in that which is unconscious, before which reason and understanding fall short, and which therefore produces effects so far surpassing all conception, there is always something dæmonic.

"So is it with music, in the highest degree, for it stands so high that no understanding can reach it, and an influence flows from it which masters all, and for which none can account. Hence, religious worship cannot dispense with it; it is one of the chief means of working upon men miraculously. Thus the Dæmonic loves to throw itself into significant individuals, espe-

cially when they are in high places, like Frederic and Peter the Great.

“Our late Grand-Duke had it to such a degree, that nobody could resist him. He had an attractive influence upon men by his mere tranquil presence, without needing even to show himself good-humoured and friendly. All that I undertook by his advice succeeded; so that, in cases where my own understanding and reason were insufficient, I needed only to ask him what was to be done, when he gave me an answer instinctively, and I could always be sure of happy results.

“He would have been enviable indeed if he could have possessed himself of my ideas and higher strivings; for when the dæmonic spirit forsook him, and only the human was left, he knew not how to set to work, and was much troubled at it.

“In Byron, also, this element was probably active in a high degree, whence he possessed powers of attraction to a great extent, so that women especially could not resist him.”

“Into the idea of the Divine,” said I, by way of experiment, “this active power which we name the Dæmonic would not seem to enter.”

“My good friend,” said Goethe, “what do we know of the idea of the Divine? and what can our narrow ideas tell of the Highest Being? Should I, like a Turk, name it with a hundred names, I should still fall short, and, in comparison with such boundless attributes, have said nothing.”

Wednesday, March 9, 1831.

Goethe continued to speak of Sir Walter Scott with the highest acknowledgment.

"We read far too many poor things," said he; "thus losing time, and gaining nothing. We should only read what we admire, as I did in my youth, and as I now experience with Sir Walter Scott. I have just begun 'Rob Roy,' and will read his best novels in succession. All is great—material, import, characters, execution; and then what infinite diligence in the preparatory studies! what truth of detail in the execution! We see, too, what English history is; and what a thing it is when such an inheritance falls to the lot of a clever poet. Our German history, in five volumes is, on the other hand, sheer poverty; so that, after 'Goetz von Berlichingen,' writers went immediately into private life, giving us an 'Agnes Bernauerin,' and an 'Otto von Wittelsbach,'* which was really not much."

I said that I had been reading "Daphnis and Chloe," in Courier's translation.

"That, also," said Goethe, "is a masterpiece, which I have often read and admired, in which Understanding, Art and Taste, appear at their highest point, and beside which the good Virgil retreats somewhat into the back-ground. The landscape is quite in the Poussin style, and appears, behind the personages, finished with a very few strokes.

"You know Courier found, in the Florentine Library, a new manuscript, containing the principal passage of the poem which was not in the preceding editions. Now, I must acknowledge that I have always read and admired the poem in its imperfect

* These are two plays written after the manner of "Gotz": the first is by Count Joseph von Törring; the second, by Francis Babo.

state, without observing or feeling that the proper apex was wanting. But this may be a proof of the excellence of the poem, since what we possessed satisfied us so completely that we never thought of what was deficient."

After dinner, Goethe showed me a drawing by Coudray, of an extremely tasteful door for the Dornburg Castle, with a Latin inscription, signifying, that he who entered should find friendly reception and entertainment, and that to him who passed by a happy journey was wished.

Goethe had translated this inscription into a German distich, and placed it as a motto over a letter which he had written, in the summer of 1828, after the death of the Grand-Duke, during his residence at Dornburg, to Colonel von Beulwitz. I had heard much in public of this letter, and was very glad when Goethe showed it me to-day, with the drawing of the door.

I read the letter with great interest, admiring the skill with which he had used the localities of the Dornburg castle and the valley below to introduce the noblest views—views suited to raise man up after sustaining a great loss, and to place him on his feet again.

I was much pleased with this letter, observing that one need not travel far in search of good material, but that all depends on the aptness of the poet's mind to produce something valuable from the most trifling occasions.

Goethe put the letter and drawing in a portfolio by themselves to preserve both for the future.

Thursday, March 10, 1831.

I read to-day, with the Prince, Goethe's novel of the "Tiger and the Lion,"* and while he was highly pleased at feeling the effect of a great art, I was no less so at taking a clear view of a finished composition. I felt a certain omnipresence of thought, which may have arisen from the fact that the poet cherished the subject in his mind for so many years, and thus became so completely master of his subject that he could survey the whole and the details with the greatest clearness, and place every single part just where it was wanted, and might prepare and influence what was coming. Everything has a relation to what is to come and to what has preceded, everything is right in its place, so that as a composition we can scarcely conceive anything more perfect. As we went on reading I felt the strongest wish that Goethe could contemplate this gem of a novel as the work of another. At the same time, I reflected that there was a great advantage in the dimensions of the subject, enabling the poet to put all skilfully together, and the reader to approach the whole and its details with some reason.

(Sup.*) Thursday, March 10, 1831.

This morning a short half hour with Goethe. I had to bring him the information that the Grand-Duchess had determined to bestow the sum of a thousand dollars upon the directors of the theatre, to be employed in the cultivation of promising young talent.

* "Die Novelle."—*Trans.*

This information gave evident pleasure to Goethe, who has at heart the further prosperity of the theatre.

I had then to consult him concerning a commission of another kind. It is the intention of the Grand-Duchess to invite to Weimar the best German author of the present time, provided he is without employment or fortune, and merely lives on the fruits of his talent, and to provide a sinecure place for him, so that he may find leisure to allow all his works to attain the utmost perfection, and not be in the piteous case of working hastily from necessity, to the prejudice of his own talent and of literature.

"The intention of the Grand-Duchess," returned Goethe, "is most princely, and I bow before her noble views; but it will be very difficult to make a proper choice. The most distinguished of our present talents are already in easy circumstances, through state employment, pensions, and their own private resources. Besides, every one would not suit here, and every one would not be really assisted by coming. I will, however, bear the noble design in mind, and see what good the next year may bring us."

Friday, March 11, 1831.

At dinner with Goethe, talked on various subjects. "It is a peculiarity of Walter Scott's," said he, "that his great talent in representing details often leads him into faults. Thus, in 'Ivanhoe,' there is a scene where they are seated at a table in a castle-hall, at night, and a stranger enters. Now, he is quite right in describing the stranger's appearance and dress, but it is a fault that he goes to the length of describing his feet, shoes, and stockings. When we sit down in the

evening, and some one comes in, we see only the upper part of his body. If I describe the feet, daylight enters at once, and the scene loses its nocturnal character."

I felt the force of these words, and noted them down for future occasions.

Goethe then continued to speak with great admiration of Sir Walter Scott. I requested him to put his views on paper, which he refused to do, remarking that Scott's art was so high that it is hard to give a public opinion about him.

Monday, March 14, 1831.

Dined with Goethe, and talked of several subjects. I had to tell him of the "Dumb Girl of Portici," which had been represented the day before yesterday; when we said that a properly-grounded motive for a revolution was not shown at all, and that this very circumstance pleased people, inasmuch as every one could fill up the gap with something that was offensive in his own city and country.

"The whole opera," said Goethe, "is, in fact, a satire upon the people, for when it makes a public matter of a fisher-girl's amour, and calls the prince a tyrant because he marries a princess, it appears as absurd and ridiculous as possible."

After dinner Goethe showed me some drawings, illustrative of Berlin phrases, in which the liveliest subjects were represented, and we praised the moderation of the artist in approaching caricature, without actually going into it.

Tuesday, March 15, 1831.

I occupied myself the whole morning with the

manuscript of the fourth volume of "Truth and Poetry," and wrote the following notes for Goethe :—

The second, fourth, and fifth books may be deemed complete, with the exception of some trifles that can easily be settled in a final revision.

Here followed some remarks on the first and third books :—

FIRST BOOK.

The narrative of Jung's failure with the ophthalmic operation is so seriously important that it induces deep internal reflection ; and, if told in society, would assuredly occasion a pause in conversation. I therefore suggest that it should terminate the first book, in order that a kind of pause may be produced.

The pretty anecdotes of the fire in the Judengasse (Jew's lane), and the skating in the mother's red velvet cloak, which are now at the end of the first book, and are not rightly placed there, should properly be connected with the portion which treats of unconscious, unpremeditated poetic production. For those events refer to a similarly happy state of mind, which, once in action, does not long think and ask what is to be done, but has already acted before the thought comes.

THIRD BOOK.

According to our plan, this book would comprise all that might be dictated respecting the external political condition of 1775, the internal condition of Germany, the education of the nobility, &c.*

* The remarks here referred to are in the *second* book of the fourth volume (the 17th of the whole) ; otherwise, Eckermann's suggestions seem to have been followed.—*Trans.*

All that belongs to "Hanswurst's Hochzeit" and other poetical projects—carried out and not carried out—might, if it did not better suit the fourth book, which is already very thick, or interrupt the connection, which is well observed there, be properly introduced in the third.

I have collected all the outlines and fragments for this purpose in the third book, and wish all happiness and inclination to dictate what is still wanting, with fresh spirit and wonted grace.

E.

Dined with the Prince and M. Soret. We talked a great deal about Courier, and then about the conclusion of Goethe's "Novel," when I made the remark that in that work import and art stood too high for people to know what to make of it. They like to hear and see over and over again what they have seen and heard already; and as they are accustomed to find the flower Poetry in thoroughly poetical fields, they are amazed when they see it springing from a thoroughly real soil. In the poetical region people will put up with anything, and no wonder is too great for belief; but here, in the broad light of real day, they are startled by the slightest deviation from the ordinary course of things. Being surrounded by a thousand wonders to which we are accustomed, we are troubled at a single one, which has hitherto been new. Again, mankind finds no difficulty in believing the wonders of an earlier period, but to give a sort of actuality to a wonder that happens to-day, and to know it as a higher reality by the side of that which is visibly

real,—this does not seem to lie in human capacity, or, if it does, it seems to have been expelled by education. Our age will hence become more and more prosaic, and, with the exception of faith in the supernatural, all poetry will gradually disappear.

As a conclusion to Goethe's "Novel," nothing is required but the feeling that man is not quite deserted by higher beings, but that, on the contrary, they keep their eye on him, sympathize with him, and, in case of need, come to his assistance.

There is something so natural in this belief, that it belongs to man, is a constituent part of his being, and is innate with all nations, as the foundation of all religion. In the first human beginnings, it appears strong; but it does not yield to the highest culture, so that we find it still great in Plato, and, last of all, just as brilliant in the author of "Daphnis and Chloe." In this charming poem, the Divine operates under the form of Pan and the nymphs, who take an interest in pious shepherds and lovers, save and protect them in the day-time, appear to them in dreams at night, and tell them what is to be done. In Goethe's "Novel," this Invisible Guardian is conceived under the form of the Eternal and the Angels, who once, in a den, amid fierce lions, guarded the prophet, and who here, in the presence of a similar monster, afford their protection to a good child. The lion does not tear the boy to pieces, but rather appears mild and docile; for those higher beings who have been active through all eternity participate in the affair.

But that this may not appear too marvellous to an incredulous nineteenth century, the poet makes use of

a second powerful motive, namely, that of music, the magic power of which has been felt by mankind from the earliest times, and by which we allow ourselves to be governed every day, without knowing how it happens.

And as Orpheus by this magic drew after him all the beasts of the forest, and as in the last Greek poem a young shepherd leads goats with his flute, so that to different melodies they disperse and assemble, fly from the enemy and graze in quiet, so in Goethe's "Novel" does music exercise its power on the lion, inasmuch as the violent beast yields to the melodies of the dulcet flute, and follows whithersoever he is led by the innocence of the boy.

When I have spoken with divers people about such inexplicable things, I have observed that man is so deeply impressed with his excellent qualities, that he does not hesitate to endow the gods with them, but cannot easily resolve to give a part of them to brutes.

Wednesday, March 16, 1831.

Dined with Goethe, to whom I brought back the fourth volume of his life, and conversed much about it.

We also spoke of the conclusion to "William Tell," and I expressed my wonder that Schiller should have committed the fault of lowering his hero by his unworthy conduct to the fugitive Duke of Suabia, whom he judges severely while he boasts of his own deed.

"It is scarcely conceivable," said Goethe, "but Schiller, like others, was subject to the influence of women; and, if he committed such a fault, it was

rather on account of this influence, than from his own fine nature."

Friday, March 18, 1831.

Dined with Goethe. I brought him "Daphnis and Chloe," which he wished to read once more.

We spoke of higher maxims, whether it was good or possible to communicate them to others. "The capacity of apprehending what is high," said Goethe, "is very rare; and therefore, in common life, a man does well to keep such things for himself, and only to give out so much as is needful to have some advantage against others."

We touched upon the point that many men, especially critics and poets, wholly ignore true greatness, while they assign an extraordinary value to mediocrity.

"Man," said Goethe, "recognises and praises only that which he himself is capable of doing; and as certain people have their proper existence in the mediocre, they get a trick of thoroughly depreciating that in literature which, while faulty, may have good points, that they may elevate the mediocre, which they praise, to a greater eminence."

I noted this that I might know how to think of such a practice in future.

We then spoke of the "Theory of Colours," and of certain German professors who continue to warn their pupils against it as a great error.

"I am sorry, for the sake of many a good scholar," said Goethe; "but, for myself, it is quite indifferent; my theory is as old as the world, and cannot always be repudiated and set aside."

Goethe then told me that he was making good progress with his new edition of the "Metamorphosis of Plants," and Soret's translation, which was more and more felicitous.

"It will be a remarkable book," said he, "inasmuch as the most varied elements are worked up into one whole. I have inserted some passages from some important young German naturalists, and it is pleasing to see that such a good style has been formed among the better writers in Germany, that we cannot tell whether one or the other is speaking. However, the book gives me more trouble than I thought, and I was at first led into the undertaking almost against myself, but something Dæmonic prevailed, which was not to be resisted."

"You did well," said I, "in yielding to such influences, for the Dæmonic seems to be of such a powerful nature, that it is sure to carry its point at last."

"Only," replied Goethe, "man, in his turn, must endeavour to carry his point against the Dæmonic; and, in the present case, I must try by all industry and toil to make my book as good as lies in my power, and as circumstances will allow. Such matters are in the same predicament as the game which the French call *codille*, where a great deal is decided by the dice which are thrown, but where it is left to the skill of the player to place the men well on the board."

I respected these excellent remarks, which I stored up as good doctrine, and as a rule for practice.

Sunday, March 20, 1831.

Goethe told me at table that he had been lately reading "Daphnis and Chloe."

"The book," said he, "is so beautiful, that, amid the bad circumstances in which we live, we cannot retain the impression we receive from it, but are astonished anew every time we read it. The clearest day prevails in it, and we think we are looking at nothing but Herculanean pictures, while these paintings react upon the book, and assist our fancy as we read."

"I was much pleased," said I, "at a certain isolation in which the whole is placed. There is scarcely a foreign allusion to take us out of those happy regions. Of the deities, Pan and the nymphs are alone active, any other is scarcely named, and still we see that these are quite enough for the wants of shepherds."

"And yet, notwithstanding all this isolation," said Goethe, "a complete world is developed. We see shepherds of every kind, agriculturists, gardeners, vine-dressers, sailors, robbers, and warriors, besides genteel townsmen, great lords, and serfs."

"We also see man," said I, "in all his grades of life, from his birth to his old age; and all the domestic circumstances which are occasioned by changes of season pass before our eyes."

"Then the landscape," said Goethe,— "how clearly is it given with a few touches! We can see, rising behind the persons, vineyards, fields, and orchards; below, the meadow and the stream; and, in the distance, the broad sea. Then there is not a trace of

gloomy days, of mists, clouds, and damp, but always the clearest bluest sky, a charming air and the driest soil, so that one would readily stretch one's naked limbs anywhere.

"The whole poem,"* continued Goethe, "shows the highest art and cultivation. It has been so well considered, that not a motive is wanting, but all are of the best and most substantial kind; as, for instance, that of the treasure near the dolphin on the shore. Then there is a taste, and a perfection, and a delicacy of feeling, which cannot be excelled. Everything that is repulsive and disturbs from without the happy condition which the poem expresses,—such as invasion, robbery, and war,—is got rid of as quickly as possible, so that scarcely a trace of it is left. Then vice appears in the train of the townsmen, and there not in the principal characters, but in a subordinate personage. All this is of the highest beauty."

"Then," said I, "I was much pleased to see how well the relation between master and servant is expressed. On the one hand, there is the kindest treatment; on the other, in spite of all naïve freedom, great respect and an endeavour to gain, in any way, the favour of the master. Thus the young townsman, who has rendered himself odious to Daphnis, endeavours, when the latter is recognised as his master's son, to regain his favour by boldly rescuing Chloe from the cowherds, and bringing her back to him."

"All these things," said Goethe, "show great understanding; it is excellent also that Chloe preserves

* "Gedicht" has a wider meaning than the English word "poem."—*Trans.*

her innocence to the end,—and the motives for this are so well contrived, that the greatest human affairs are brought under notice. One must write a whole book properly to estimate all the great merits of this poem, and one would do well to read it every year, to be instructed by it again and again, and to receive anew the impression of its great beauty.”

Monday, March 21, 1831.

We talked on political subjects,—of the incessant disturbances at Paris, and the fancy of young people to meddle in the highest affairs of state.

“In England, also,” said I, “the students some time ago tried to obtain an influence on the decision of the Catholic question by sending in petitions; but they were laughed at, and no further notice was taken of them.”

“The example of Napoleon,” said Goethe, “has, especially in the young people of France who grew up under that hero, excited a spirit of egotism; and they will not rest until a great despot once again rises up among them, in whom they may see the perfection of what they themselves wish to be. The misfortune is, that a man like Napoleon will not so soon again be born; and I almost fear that some hundred thousands of human lives will be wasted before the world is again tranquillized.

“Of literary influence there can be no thought at present; one can now do nothing further than quietly prepare good things for a more peaceful time.”

After these few political remarks, we spoke again of “Daphnis and Chloe.” Goethe praised Courier’s translation as perfect.

“Courier did well,” said he, “to respect and retain Amyot’s old translation, and only in parts to improve, to purify, and bring it nearer the original. The old French is so naïve, and suits the subject so perfectly, that it will not be easy to make, in any language, a more perfect translation of this book.”

We then spoke of Courier’s own works,—of his little fugitive pieces, and the defence of the famous ink-spot on the manuscript at Florence.

“Courier,” said Goethe, “is a great natural talent. He has features of Lord Byron, as also of Beaumarchais and Diderot. He is like Byron in command over all things which may serve him as argument,—like Beaumarchais in his adroitness as an advocate,—like Diderot in dialectic skill,—and it is not possible to be more spirited and witty.* However, he seems not entirely to clear himself from the ink-spot accusation, and is, in his whole tendency, not sufficiently positive to claim unqualified praise. He is at variance with all the world, and we cannot but suppose that some fault is on his side.”

We spoke of the difference between the German notion *Geist*, and the French *Esprit*.

“The French *Esprit*,” said Goethe, “means nearly the same with our German word *Witz*. Our *Geist* might, perhaps, be expressed in French by *Esprit* and *Ame*. It includes the idea of productivity, which is not in the French *Esprit*.”

“Voltaire,” said I, “had nevertheless what we name

* The words “spirited and witty” are used by the American translator as an equivalent for the untranslatable “geistreich.” The remarks which immediately follow touch upon this most difficult word.—*Trans.*

Geist in the German sense of the word. And as *Esprit* does not suffice, what word do the French use?"

"In such a lofty instance," said Goethe, "they say *Génie*."

"I am now reading," said I, "a volume of Diderot, and am astonished by the extraordinary talent of the man. And what knowledge! what a power of language! We look into a great animated world, where one constantly stimulated another, and mind and character were kept in such constant exercise, that both must be flexible and strong. But it seems to me quite extraordinary to see what men the French had in their literature in the last century. I am astonished when I only look at it."

"It was the metamorphosis of a hundred-year-old literature," said Goethe, "which had been growing ever since Louis XIV., and stood now in full flower. But it was really Voltaire who excited such minds as Diderot, D'Alembert, and Beaumarchais; for to be *somewhat* near him a man needed to be *much*, and could take no holidays."

Goethe then told me of a young professor of the Oriental languages and literature at Jena, who had lived a long time at Paris, and was so highly cultivated, that he wished I would make his acquaintance.

As I went, he gave me an essay, by Schrön, on the expected comet, that I might not remain entirely a stranger to such matters.

Tuesday, March 22, 1831.

After dinner, Goethe read to me passages from the letter of a young friend, at Rome. Some German artists appeared there with long hair, moustachios, shirt-

collars turned over on old-fashioned German coats, tobacco-pipes, and bull-dogs. They do not seem to visit Rome for the sake of the great masters, or to learn anything. To them Raphael seems weak, and Titian merely a good colourist.

"Niebuhr," said Goethe, "was right when he saw a barbarous age coming. It is already here, we are in the midst of it; for wherein does barbarism consist, unless in not appreciating what is excellent!"

Our young friend then gave an account of the carnival, the election of the new pope, and the revolution which broke out immediately after.

We saw Horace Vernet ensconcing himself like a knight, while some German artists stay quietly at home, and cut off their beards, which seems to intimate that they have not, by their conduct, made themselves very popular among the Romans.

We discussed the question whether the errors now perceptible in some young German artists had proceeded from individuals, and spread abroad by intellectual contagion, or whether they had their origin in the general tendency of the time.

"They come," said Goethe, "from a few individuals, and have now been in operation for forty years. The doctrine was, that the artist chiefly needs piety and genius to be equal to the best. Such a doctrine was very flattering, and was eagerly snatched up. For, to become pious, a man need learn nothing, and genius each one inherited from his mother. One need only utter something that flatters indolence and conceit, to be sure of plenty of adherents among commonplace people."

Friday, March 25, 1831.

Goethe showed me an elegant green elbow-chair, which he had lately bought at an auction.

“However,” said he, “I shall use it but little, or not at all; for all kinds of commodiousness are against my nature. You see in my chamber no sofa; I always sit in my old wooden chair, and never till a few weeks ago have I had a leaning-place put for my head. If surrounded by convenient tasteful furniture, my thoughts are absorbed, and I am placed in an agreeable but passive state. Unless we are accustomed to them from early youth, splendid chambers and elegant furniture are for people who neither have nor can have any thoughts.”

Sunday, March 27, 1831.

After long expectations, the finest spring weather has come at last. On the perfectly blue heaven floats only some little white cloud now and then, and it is warm enough to resume summer clothing.

Goethe had the table covered in a pavilion in the garden, and so we dined once more in the open air. We talked of the Grand-Duchess; how she is quietly at work in all directions, doing good, and making the hearts of all her subjects her own.

“The Grand-Duchess,” said Goethe, “has as much intellect and sweetness as good-will; she is a true blessing to the country. And as men are everywhere quick to feel whence they receive benefits, worshipping the sun and kindly elements, I wonder not that all hearts turn to her with love, and that she is speedily appreciated, as she deserves to be.”

I mentioned that I had begun "*Minna von Barnhelm*" with the Prince, and observed how excellent this piece appeared to me.

"Lessing," said I, "has been spoken of as a cold man of understanding; but I find in this drama as much heart, soul, charming naturalness, and free world-culture of a fresh, cheerful, living man, as one could desire."

"You may imagine," said Goethe, "what an effect that work produced on us young people when it came out in that dark time. Truly it was a glittering meteor. It taught us to perceive that there was something higher than that of which the weak literary epoch gave any notion. The first two acts are a model in the art of introduction; from which much has been learned, and much may be learned still. Nowadays, indeed, writers are not curious about this art: the effect, which was once expected in the third act, they will now have in the first scene: and they do not reflect that it is with poetry as with going to sea, where we should push from the shore, and reach a certain elevation, before we unfurl all our sails."

Goethe had some excellent Rhine wine brought, which had been sent by his Frankfort friends, as a present, on his last birthday. He told some stories about Merck, and how he could not pardon the Grand-Duke for having once, in the Ruhl near Eisenach, praised an ordinary wine as excellent.

"Merck and I," he continued, "were always to one another as Mephistophiles to Faust. Thus he scoffed at a letter written by my father from Italy, in which the latter complained of the miserable way of

living,—the heavy wine, the food to which he was unaccustomed, and the mosquitoes. Merck could not forgive him, in that delicious country and surrounded by such magnificence, for being troubled about such little matters as eating, drinking, and flies.

“ All Merck’s tauntings, no doubt, proceeded from a high state of culture ; only, as he was not productive, but had, on the contrary, a decidedly negative tendency, he was ever more inclined to blame than praise, and was involuntarily always seeking for means to gratify this inclination.”

We talked of Vogel, and his ministerial talents ; of * * * , and his character.

“ * * * ,” said Goethe, “ is a man by himself—a man who can be compared with no other. He was the only one who sided with me in opposing the freedom of the press : he stands fast ; one can depend on him ; he will always abide by what is legitimate.”

After dinner, we walked up and down in the garden, taking our pleasure in the white snow-drops and yellow crocuses, now in full flower. The tulips, too, were coming out ; and we talked of the splendour and costliness of this growth of Holland.

“ A great flower-painter,” said Goethe, “ is not now to be expected : we have attained too high a degree of scientific truth ; and the botanist counts the stamina after the painter, while he has no eye for picturesque lights and grouping.”

Monday, March 28, 1831.

To-day I again passed some very delightful hours with Goethe. “ My ‘ Metamorphosis of Plants,’ ”

said he, "is as good as finished. What I have to say about the spiral and Herr von Martius is also as good as done, and I have this morning resumed the fourth volume of my 'Autobiography,' and drawn up a scheme of what I have yet to do. I may almost say that I find it enviable to be allowed, at my advanced age, to write the history of my youth, and to describe an epoch which is, in many respects, of high significance."

We talked over the several particulars, which were present to my mind as well as to his.

"In the description of your love-affair with Lili," said I, "we never miss your youth, but these scenes bear the perfect breath of early years."

"That is because such scenes are poetical," said Goethe, "and I was able to compensate by the force of poetry for the feeling of youthful love, in which I was deficient."

We then talked of the remarkable passage, in which Goethe describes his sister's situation. "This chapter," said he, "will be read with interest by many ladies of education, for there will be many like my sister in this respect, that, with superior mental and moral endowments, they are without the advantage of personal beauty."

"That, when a ball or festival was at hand," said I, "she was generally afflicted with an eruption in the face, is so odd that it may be ascribed to the influence of something dæmonic."

"She was a remarkable being," said Goethe; "she stood morally very high, and had not a trace of sensuality about her. The thought of resigning herself to

a man was repulsive to her, and we may imagine that this peculiarity caused many unpleasant hours in marriage. Women who have a similar aversion, or do not love their husbands, will feel the force of this. On this account I could never look upon my sister as married; she would have been much more in her place as an abbess in a convent.

“Although she was married to one of the best of men, she was still unhappy in a married life, and hence it was that she so passionately opposed my projected union with Lili.”

Tuesday, March 29, 1831.

We talked to-day about Merck, and Goethe told me some more characteristic features.

“The late Grand-Duke,” said he, “was very fond of Merck, so that he once became his security for a debt of four thousand dollars. Before long, Merck, to our astonishment, sent the bond back. His circumstances had not improved, and we could not divine what sort of a negociation he had made. When I saw him again, he explained the enigma thus,—

“‘The Duke,’ said he, ‘is an excellent, generous man, who trusts and helps men whenever he can. Now I thought to myself, ‘If you cheat him out of his money, that will prejudice a thousand others; for he will lose his precious trustfulness, and many unfortunate but worthy men will suffer, because one was a rascal.’ Well now—what have I done? I have made a speculation, and borrowed the money from a scoundrel, for if I cheat him it will be no matter; but if I had cheated our good lord, it would have been a pity.’”

We laughed at the whimsical greatness of the man.

"Merck had a habit," continued Goethe, "of continually shouting *he, he*, as he talked. This habit grew upon him with advancing years, till at length it was like the bark of a dog. He fell at last into a deep hypochondriacal gloom, the consequence of his many speculations, and finished by shooting himself. He imagined he must become bankrupt; but it was found that his affairs were by no means in so bad a state as he had supposed."

Wednesday, March 30, 1831.

We talked again of the Dæmonic.

"It throws itself willingly into figures of importance," said Goethe, "and prefers somewhat dark times. In a clear prosaic city, like Berlin, for instance, it would scarcely find occasion to manifest itself."

In this remark Goethe expressed what I had been thinking some days since. This gave me pleasure, as we always feel delight in finding our thoughts confirmed.

Yesterday and this morning I had been reading the third volume of his "Biography," and felt, as in the case of a foreign language, when, after making some progress, we again read a book, which we thought we understood before, but now first perceive in its minutest touches and delicate shades.

"Your 'Biography,'" said I, "is a book by which we find our culture greatly assisted."

"Those are merely results from my life," said he; "and the particular facts that are related serve only to confirm a general reflection—a higher truth."

“What you state about Basedow,” said I, “how, in order to attain his higher ends, he stood in need of persons, and would have gained their favour, but never reflected that he would spoil all by such a totally reckless utterance of his offensive religious views, and by making men regard with suspicion that to which they adhered with love,—these and similar traits appear to me highly important.”

“I imagine,” said Goethe, “that there are in the book some symbols of human life. I called it *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (Poetry and Truth), because it raises itself by higher tendencies from the region of a lower Reality. Now Jean Paul, in the spirit of contradiction, has written *Wahrheit aus meinem Leben* (Truth out of my Life), as if the *truth* from the life of such a man could be any other than that the author was a Philistine. But the Germans do not easily understand how to receive anything out of the common course, and what is of a high nature often passes by them without their being aware of it. A fact of our lives is valuable, not so far as it is true, but so far as it is significant.”

Thursday, March 31, 1831.

Dined at the Prince's with Soret and Meyer. We talked of literary matters, and Meyer gave an account of his first acquaintance with Schiller.

“I was walking with Goethe,” said he, “in the place called the Paradise, near Jena, where we met Schiller, and conversed with him for the first time. He had not yet completed his ‘Don Carlos;’ he had just returned from Swabia, and seemed very sick, and in a state of nervous suffering. His face was like the

picture of a crucified Christ. Goethe thought he could not live a fortnight ; but as his situation became more agreeable he grew better, and, indeed, it was not till then that he wrote all his important works."

Meyer then related some traits of Jean Paul and Schlegel—both of whom he had met at a public-house in Heidelberg—and some pleasant reminiscences of his residence in Italy, which entertained us highly.

I always feel happy near Meyer ; probably because he is a self-relying, satisfied person, who takes but little notice of the circumstances around him, but at suitable intervals exhibits his own comfortable soul. At the same time, he is everywhere well-grounded, possesses the greatest treasure of knowledge, and a memory to which the most remote events are as present as if they happened yesterday. He has a preponderance of understanding which might make us dread him, if it did not rest upon the noblest culture ; but, as it is, his quiet presence is always agreeable, always instructive.

(Sup.*) Wednesday, March 31, 1831.

Goethe had been for some time very unwell, so that he could only see his most intimate friends. Some weeks before, bleeding had been ordered him ; then he felt uneasiness and pain in his right leg, until at last his internal complaint vented itself by a wound in the foot ; when improvement speedily followed. This wound, too, has now healed for some days, and he is now as lively as ever.

The Grand-Duchess had paid him a visit to-day, and had returned very well satisfied. She had inquired after his health ; when he very gallantly answered, that

until to-day he had not perceived his recovery, but that her presence had made him once more feel the blessing of restored health.

Friday, April 1, 1830.

At table talked with Goethe on various subjects. He showed me a water-colour drawing by Herr von Reutern, representing a young peasant, who stands in the market-place of a small town near a female basket-seller. The young man is surveying the baskets, which lie before him, while two females, who are seated, and a stout lass, who stands by them, regard his comely, youthful face with satisfaction. The picture is so prettily composed, and there is such *naïveté* and truth in the expression of the figures, that one cannot look at it enough.

“Water-colour painting,” said Goethe, “is brought to a very high degree in this picture. There are some silly folks who say that Herr von Reutern is indebted to no one in his art, but has everything from himself, as if a man could have anything from himself but clumsiness and stupidity. If this artist has had no master so called, he has nevertheless had intercourse with excellent masters, and from these, as well as from great predecessors and ever-present nature, he has acquired what he now possesses. Nature has given him an excellent talent, and nature and art together have perfected him. He is excellent, and in many respects unique, but we cannot say that he has everything from himself. Of a thoroughly crazy and defective artist, we may, indeed, say he has everything from himself; but of an excellent one, never.”

Goethe then showed me a work by the same artist,

a frame richly painted with gold and various colours, with a place left in the middle for an inscription. At the top there was a building in the Gothic style ; rich arabesques, with landscapes and domestic scenes interwoven, ran down the two sides ; at the bottom was a pleasant woodland scene, with the freshest grass and foliage.

“ Herr von Reutern,” says Goethe, “ wishes I would write neatly in the blank space ; but his frame is such a splendid work of art, that I dread to spoil the picture with my handwriting. I have composed some verses for the purpose, and think it will be better to have them inserted by the hand of a calligrapher. I would then sign them myself. What do you advise in this matter ? ”

“ If I were Herr von Reutern,” said I, “ I should be grieved to have the poem in the hand of another ; happy, if it were written in your own. The painter has displayed art enough in the frame—none is needed in the writing ; it is only important that it should be genuine—in your own hand. I advise you, too, not to use the Roman, but the German text ; for your hand has in that a more peculiar character, and, besides, it harmonizes better with the Gothic design in the frame.”

“ You may be right,” said Goethe ; “ and in the end it will be the shortest way. Perhaps to-day will bring a courageous moment, in which I may venture upon it. But if I make a blot on the beautiful picture,” he added, laughing, “ you shall answer for it.”

“ Write only,” said I, “ and it will be well, however it may be.”

Tuesday, April 5, 1831.

At noon with Goethe. "In Art," said he, "we do not easily meet a talent that gives us more pleasure than that of Neureuther. Artists seldom confine themselves to what they can do well; most are always trying to do more than they can, and are too fond of going beyond the circle in which Nature has placed their talent. But of Neureuther, we can say that he stands *above* his talent. Objects from all departments of nature are at his command; he draws ground, rocks, and trees, as well as men or animals, and, while he lavishes such wealth on slight marginal drawings, he seems to play with his capabilities, and the spectator feels that pleasure which is ever wont to accompany a free, easy, libation from abundant means.

"No one has gone so far as he in marginal drawings; even the great talent of Albert Dürer has been to him less a pattern than an incitement. I will send a copy of these drawings to Scotland, to Mr. Carlyle, and hope thus to make no unwelcome present to that friend."

(Sup. *) Wednesday, April 14, 1831.

A soirée at the Prince's. One of the old gentlemen present, who remembered many things of the first years of Goethe's residence here, related to us the following very characteristic anecdote:—

"I was present," said he, "when Goethe, in the year 1784, made his well-known renowned speech, on the solemn opening of the Ilmenau mine, to which he had invited all the officers and influential persons of the town and environs. He appeared to have had his

speech well in his head ; for he spoke for a long while with perfect fluency, and without any hesitation. All at once, however, he appeared to be quite forsaken by his good genius ; the thread of his thoughts seemed to be cut off, and he appeared quite to have lost the power of grasping what he had further to say. This would have thrown any one else into great embarrassment, but it was not so with him. On the contrary, he looked for at least ten minutes, steadily and quietly, round the circle of his numerous audience, who were so struck by his personal power, that during the very long and almost ridiculous pause, every one remained perfectly quiet. At last he appeared to have again become master of his subject ; he went on with his speech, and, without hesitation, continued it very ably to the end, as unembarrassed and serene as if nothing had happened.

Monday, May 2, 1831.

Goethe delighted me with the information that he had lately succeeded in almost finishing the fifth act of "Faust," which had hitherto been wanting.

"The purport of these scenes," said he, "is above thirty years old ; it was of such importance that I could not lose my interest in it, but so difficult to carry out that it frightened me. By various arts I am now in the right train again, and, if fortune favours, I shall write off the fourth act at once."

Goethe then mentioned a well-known author. "He is a talent," said he, "to whom party-hatred serves as an alliance, and who would have produced no effect without it. We find frequent instances in literature, where hatred supplies the place of genius,

and where small talents appear important, by coming forward as organs of a party. Thus too, in life, we find a multitude of persons, who have not character enough to stand alone; these in the same way attach themselves to a party, by which they feel themselves strengthened, and can at last make some figure.

Sunday, May 15, 1831.

Dined alone with Goethe in his work-room. After much cheerful discourse he at last turned the conversation to his personal affairs, by rising and taking from his desk a written paper.

“When one, like myself,” said he, “has passed the age of eighty, one has hardly a right to live, but ought each day to hold oneself ready to be called away, and think of setting one’s house in order. I have, as I lately told you, appointed you in my will editor of my literary remains, and have this morning drawn up, as a sort of contract, a little paper, which I wish you to sign with me.”

With these words, Goethe placed before me the paper, in which I found mentioned by name the works, both finished and unfinished, which were to be published after his death. I had come to an understanding with him upon essentials, and we both signed the contract.

The material, which I had already from time to time been busy in revising, I estimated at about fifteen volumes. We then talked of certain matters of detail, which had not been yet decided.

“The case may arise,” said Goethe, “that the publisher is unwilling to go beyond a certain number

of sheets, and that hence some part of the material must be omitted. In that case, you may omit the polemic part of my 'Theory of Colours.' My peculiar doctrine is contained in the theoretical part; and as the historical part is already of a polemic character, inasmuch as the leading errors of the Newtonian theory are discussed there, you will almost have polemics enough. I by no means disavow my severe dissection of the Newtonian maxims; it was necessary at the time, and will also have its value hereafter; but, at bottom, all polemic action is repugnant to my proper nature, and I can take but little pleasure in it."

We next talked about the "Maxims and Reflections," which had been printed at the end of the second and third volumes of the "Wanderjahre."

When he began to remodel and finish this novel, which had previously appeared in one volume,* Goethe intended to expand it into two, as indeed is expressed in the announcement of the new edition of his entire works. But, as the work progressed, the manuscript grew beyond expectation; and, as his secretary wrote widely, Goethe was deceived, and thought that he had enough not only for two but for three volumes, and accordingly the manuscript went in three volumes to the publishers. However, when the printing had reached a certain point, it was found that Goethe had made a miscalculation, and that the two

* This original shorter "Wanderjahre" is the one translated by Mr. Carlyle, and inserted in his "Specimens of German Romance." The larger novel, which appears in Goethe's collected works, has not, to my knowledge, been translated.—*Trans.*

last volumes especially were too small. They sent for more manuscript, and, as the course of the novel (*Roman*) could not be altered, and it was impossible to invent, write, and insert a new tale (*Novelle*) in the hurry of the moment, Goethe was really in some perplexity.

Under these circumstances he sent for me, told me the state of the case, and mentioned at the same time how he thought to help himself out of the difficulty, laying before me two large bundles of manuscript, which he had caused to be fetched for that purpose.

“In these two parcels you will find various papers hitherto unpublished, detached pieces, finished and unfinished, opinions on natural science, art, literature, and life, all mingled together. Suppose you were to make up from these, six or eight printed sheets to fill the gaps in my ‘Wanderjahre.’ Strictly speaking, they have nothing to do with it, but the proceeding may be justified by the fact that mention is made of an archive in Makaria’s house, in which such detached pieces are preserved. Thus we shall not only get over a great difficulty for the moment, but find a fitting vehicle for sending a number of very interesting things into the world.”

I approved of the plan, set to work at once, and completed the desired arrangement in a short time. Goethe seemed well satisfied. I had put together the whole in two principal parts, one under the title—“From Makaria’s Archive;” the other, under the head—“According to the Views of the Wanderer.” And as Goethe, at this time, had just finished two

important poems, one—"On Schiller's Skull," and the other—"Kein Wesen kann zu nichts zerfallen" (No being can fall away to nothing), he was desirous to bring out these also, and we added them at the close of the two divisions.

But when the "Wanderjahre" came out, no one knew what to make of it. The progress of the romance was seen to be interrupted by a number of enigmatical sayings, the explanation of which could be expected only from men of certain departments, such as artists, literati, and natural philosophers, and which greatly annoyed all other readers, especially those of the fair sex. Then, as for the two poems, people could as little understand them as they could guess how they got into such a place. Goethe laughed at this.

"What is done is done," said he to-day, "and all you have to do is, when you edit my literary remains, to insert these things in their proper places, so that when my works are republished, they may be distributed in proper order, and the 'Wanderjahre' may be reduced to two volumes, according to the original intention."

We agreed that I should hereafter arrange all the aphorisms relating to Art in a volume on subjects of art, all relating to Nature in a volume on natural science in general, and all the ethical and literary maxims in a volume likewise adapted for them.

Wednesday, May 5, 1831.

We talked of "Wallenstein's Camp." I had often heard that Goethe had assisted in the composition of

this piece, and, in particular, that the Capuchin sermon came from him. To-day, at dinner, I asked him, and he replied—

“At bottom, it is all Schiller’s own work. But, as we lived in such a relation that Schiller not only told me his plan, and talked it over with me, but also communicated what he did from day to day, hearing and using my remarks, I may be said to have had some share in it. For the Capuchin sermon, I sent him a discourse, by Abraham a Sancta Clara, from which he immediately composed his with great talent.

“I scarcely remember that any passages came from me except the two lines—

‘Ein Hauptmann den ein andrer erstach
Liess mir ein paar glückliche Würfel nach.’

A captain, whom another slew,
Left me a pair of lucky dice.

Wishing to give some motive for the peasant’s possession of the false dice, I wrote down these lines in the manuscript with my own hand. Schiller had not troubled himself about that, but, in his bold way, had given the peasant the dice without inquiring much how he came by them. A careful linking together of motives was, as I have said, not in his way; whence, perhaps, his pieces had so much the greater effect on the stage.”

Sunday, May 29, 1831.

Goethe told me of a boy who could not console himself after he had committed a trifling fault.

“I was sorry to observe this,” said he, “for it shows a too tender conscience, which values so highly

its own moral self that it will excuse nothing in it. Such a conscience makes hypochondriacal men, if it is not balanced by great activity."

A nest of young hedge-sparrows, with one of the old birds, which had been caught with bird-lime, had lately been brought me. I saw with admiration that the bird not only continued to feed its young in my chamber, but even, when set free through the window, returned to them again. Such parental love, superior to danger and imprisonment, moved me deeply, and I, to-day, expressed my surprise to Goethe.

"Foolish man!" he replied, with a meaning smile; "if you believed in God, you would not wonder.

" 'Ihm ziemt's, die Welt im Innern zu bewegen,
Natur in Sich, Sich in Natur zu hegen,
So daas, was in Ihm lebt, und webt, und ist,
Nie Seine Kraft, nie Seinen Geist vermisst.'

He from within glories to move the world,
To foster Nature in Himself, Himself
In Nature, so that all that lives in Him
Is ne'er without His spirit and His strength.

"Did not God inspire the bird with this all-powerful love for its young, and did not similar impulses pervade all animate nature, the world could not subsist. But thus is the divine energy everywhere diffused, and divine love everywhere active."

Goethe made a similar remark a short time ago, when a model from Myron's cow, with the suckling calf, was sent him by a young sculptor.

"Here," said he, "we have a subject of the highest sort—the nourishing principle which upholds the world, and pervades all nature, is here brought before our

eyes by a beautiful symbol. This, and similar images, I call the true symbols of the omnipresence of God."

Monday, June 6, 1831.

Goethe showed me to-day the beginning of the fifth act of "Faust," which had hitherto been wanting. I read to the place where the cottage of Philemon and Baucis is burned, and Faust, standing by night on the balcony of his palace, smells the smoke, which is borne to him by a light breeze.

"These names, Philemon and Baucis," said I, "transport me to the Phrygian coast, reminding me of the famous couple of antiquity. But our scene belongs to modern days, and a Christian landscape."

"My Philemon and Baucis," said Goethe, "have nothing to do with that renowned ancient couple, and the tradition connected with them. I gave this couple the names merely to elevate the characters. The persons and relations are similar, and hence the use of the names has a good effect."

We then spoke of Faust, whom the hereditary portion of his character—discontent—has not left even in his old age, and who, amid all the treasures of the world, and in a new dominion of his own making, is annoyed by a couple of lindens, a cottage, and a bell, which are not his. He is therein not unlike Ahab, King of Israel, who fancied he possessed nothing, unless he could also make the vineyard of Naboth his own.

"Faust," said Goethe, "when he appears in the fifth act, should, according to my design, be exactly a hundred years old, and I rather think it would be well expressly to say so in some passage."

We then spoke of the conclusion, and Goethe directed my attention to the passage—

“Delivered is the noble spirit *
From the control of evil powers ;
Who ceaselessly doth strive will merit
That we should save and make him ours :
If *Love* celestial never cease
To watch him from its *upper sphere ;*
The children of eternal peace
Bear him to cordial welcome there.”

“In these lines,” said he, “is contained the key to Faust’s salvation. In Faust himself there is an activity which becomes constantly higher and purer to the end, and from above there is eternal love coming to his aid. This harmonizes perfectly with our religious views, according to which we cannot obtain heavenly bliss through our own strength alone, but with the assistance of divine grace.

“You will confess that the conclusion, where the redeemed soul is carried up, was difficult to manage ; and that I, amid such supersensual matters, about which we scarcely have even an intimation, might easily have lost myself in the vague, if I had not, by means of sharply-drawn figures, and images from the Christian church, given my poetical design a desirable form and substance.”

In the following weeks Goethe finished the fourth act, which had yet been wanting ; so that in August the whole second part was sewed together quite complete. Goethe was extremely happy in having at last

* This is Mrs. Fuller’s version, with a slight alteration.—*Trans.*

attained this object, towards which he had been striving so long.

“My remaining days,” said he, “I may now consider a free gift; and it is now, in fact, of little consequence what I now do, or whether I do anything.”

(Sup.) Sunday, June 20, 1831.

This afternoon a short half hour at Goethe's, whom I found still at dinner.

We conversed upon some subjects of natural science; particularly upon the imperfection and insufficiency of language, by which errors and false views which afterwards could not easily be overcome were spread abroad. “The case is simply this,” said Goethe. “All languages have arisen from surrounding human necessities, human occupations, and the general feelings and views of man. If, now, a superior man gains an insight into the secret operations of nature, the language which has been handed down to him is not sufficient to express anything so remote from human affairs. He ought to have at command the language of spirits to express adequately his peculiar perceptions. But as this is not the case, he must, in his views of the extraordinary in nature, always grasp at human expressions, with which he almost always falls too short, lowering his subject, or even injuring and destroying it.”

“If *you* say this,” said I, “you who always pursue your subjects very closely, and, as an enemy to phrases, can always find the most fitting expressions for your higher perceptions, there is something in it. But I should have thought that, generally, we Germans might be contented. Our language is so extraordinarily rich,

elaborated, and capable of progress, that even if we are obliged sometimes to have recourse to a trope, we can still arrive pretty nearly at the proper expression. The French are at a great disadvantage when compared with us. With them the expression for some higher view of nature by a trope, generally borrowed from a technicality, is at once material and vulgar, so that it is by no means adequate to a higher view."

"How right you are," said Goethe, "has appeared to me lately, on the occasion of the dispute between Cuvier and Geoffrey de St. Hilaire. Geoffrey de St. Hilaire is a man who has certainly a great insight into the spiritual workings of nature; but his French language, so far as he is constrained to use traditional expressions, leaves him quite in the lurch. And this not only in mysteriously spiritual, but also in visible, purely corporeal subjects and relations. If he would express the single parts of an organic being, he has no other word but *materialien*: thus, for instance, the bones, which, as homogeneous parts, form the organic whole of an arm, are placed upon the same scale of expression as the stones and planks with which a house is built.

"In the same inappropriate manner," continued Goethe, "the French use the expression *composition*, in speaking of the productions of nature. I can certainly put together the individual parts of a machine made of separate pieces, and, upon such a subject, speak of a composition; but not when I have in my mind the individual parts of an organic whole, which produce themselves with life, and are pervaded by a common soul."

"It appears to me," added I, "that the expression *composition* is also inappropriate and degrading to genuine productions of art and poetry."

"It is a thoroughly contemptible word," returned Goethe, "for which we have to thank the French, and of which we should endeavour to rid ourselves as soon as possible. How can one say, Mozart has *composed* (*componiit*) Don Juan! Composition! As if it were a piece of cake or biscuit, which had been stirred together out of eggs, flour, and sugar! It is a spiritual creation, in which the details, as well as the whole, are pervaded by *one* spirit, and by the breath of *one* life; so that the producer did not make experiments, and patch together, and follow his own caprice, but was altogether in the power of the dæmonic spirit of his genius, and acted according to his orders."

(Sup. *) Sunday, July 27, 1831.

We spoke of Victor Hugo. "He is a fine talent," said Goethe, "but quite entangled in the unhappy romantic tendency of his time, by which he is seduced to represent, together with what is beautiful, also that which is most insupportable and hideous. I have lately been reading his 'Notre Dame de Paris,' and required no little patience to support the horror with which this reading has inspired me. It is the most abominable book that ever was written! Besides, one is not even indemnified for the torture one has to endure by the pleasure one might receive from a truthful representation of human nature or human character. His book is, on the contrary, utterly destitute of nature and truth! The so-called acting personages whom he

brings forward are not human beings with living flesh and blood, but miserable wooden puppets, which he deals with as he pleases, and which he causes to make all sorts of contortions and grimaces just as he needs them for his desired effects. But what an age it must be which not only renders such a book possible, and calls it into existence, but even finds it endurable and delightful."

(Sup.*) Wednesday, July 14, 1831.

I and the Prince accompanied his majesty, the King of Wurtemberg, to Goethe's. On our return the king appeared much pleased, and deputed me to convey his thanks to Goethe, for the pleasure this visit had given him.

(Sup.*) Thursday, July 15, 1831.

A moment with Goethe, when I executed my yesterday's commission from the king. I found him occupied in studies relative to the spiral tendency of plants; of which new discovery his opinion is, that it will be carried a great way, and that it will exercise a great influence upon science. "There is nothing," said he, "beyond the pleasure which the study of nature produces. Her secrets are of unfathomable depth, but it is granted to us men to look into them more and more; and the very fact that she remains unfathomable at last perpetually charms us to approach her again and again, and ever to seek for new lights and new discoveries."

(Sup.*) Tuesday, July 20, 1831.

After dinner, a short half hour with Goethe, whom I found in a very cheerful, mild humour. He spoke

of various things, at last of Carlsbad ; and he joked about the various love affairs which he had experienced there. “ A little passion,” said he, “ is the only thing which can render a watering-place supportable ; without it, one dies of ennui. I was almost always lucky enough to find there some little ‘ elective affinity’ (*Wahlverwandtschaft*), which entertained me during the few weeks. I recollect one circumstance in particular, which even now gives me pleasure.

“ I one day visited *Frau von Reck*. After a commonplace chat, I had taken my leave, and met, as I went out, a lady, with two very pretty young girls. ‘ Who was that gentleman who just now left you ? ’ asked the lady. ‘ It was Goethe,’ answered *Frau von Reck*. ‘ Oh, how I regret,’ returned the lady ‘ that he did not stay, and that I have not had the happiness of making his acquaintance ! ’ ‘ You have lost nothing by it, my dear,’ said *Frau von Reck*. ‘ He is very dull amongst ladies, unless they are pretty enough to inspire him with some interest. Ladies of our age must not expect to make him talkative or amiable.’

“ When the two young ladies left the house with their mother, they thought of *Frau von Reck*’s words. ‘ We are young, we are pretty,’ said they, ‘ let us see if we cannot succeed in captivating and taming this renowned savage ! ’ The next morning, on the promenade by the Sprudel, they made me, in passing, the most graceful and amiable salutations, and I could not forbear taking the opportunity of approaching and accosting them. They were charming ! I spoke to them again and again, they led me to their mother, and so I was caught. From that time we

saw each other daily, nay, we spent whole days together. In order to make our connection more intimate, it happened that the betrothed of the one arrived, when I devoted myself more exclusively to the other. I was also very amiable to the mother, as may be imagined ; in fact, we were all thoroughly pleased with one another, and I spent so many happy days with this family, that the recollection of them is even now highly agreeable. The two girls soon related to me the conversation between their mother and Frau von Reck, describing the conspiracy which they had contrived for my conquest, and brought to a fortunate issue."

An anecdote of another kind occurs to me, which Goethe had related to me before, but which may find a place here.

" I was once walking," said he, " towards evening, in the castle garden with a friend, when, at the end of an avenue, we unexpectedly remarked two other persons of our circle, who were walking in quiet conversation with one another. I cannot name either the lady or the gentleman ; but that is not to the purpose. They conversed, and appeared to think of nothing,—when, suddenly, their heads inclined towards each other, and they exchanged a hearty kiss. They then resumed their former direction, and continued their conversation as if nothing had happened. ' Did you see it?' exclaimed my friend, full of astonishment ; ' may I believe my eyes?' ' I did see it,' returned I, quietly, ' but I do not believe it.' "

(Sup.*) Monday, August 2, 1831.

We spoke of the metamorphosis of plants, and

especially of Decandolle's doctrine of symmetry, which Goethe considers a mere delusion.

"Nature," added he, "does not reveal herself to every one. On the contrary, she deports herself towards many like a young tantalizing girl, who allures us by a thousand charms, but at the moment when we expect to seize her and to possess her, slips from our arms."

(Sup.*) Wednesday, October 19, 1831.

The meeting of the society for the promotion of agriculture was held to-day at Belvidere. We had also the first exposition of products and objects of industry, which was richer than had been expected. Then there was a great dinner of the numerous assembled members. Goethe joined them, to the joyful surprise of all present. He remained some time, and surveyed the objects exhibited with evident interest. His appearance made a most agreeable impression, especially upon those who had not seen him before.

(Sup.) Thursday, December 1, 1831.

Passed a short hour with Goethe, in varied conversation. We then came to Soret.

"I have lately been reading a very pretty poem of his," said Goethe, "a trilogy,—the first two parts of which possess an agreeable rusticity, but the last, under the title 'Midnight,' bears a sombre character. In this 'Midnight' he has succeeded. In reading it, one actually breathes the breath of night; almost as in the pictures of Rembrandt, in which one also seems to feel the night-air. Victor Hugo has treated similar subjects, but not with such felicity. In the nocturnal

scenes of this indisputably great man, it is never actually night; on the contrary, the subjects remain always as distinct and visible as if it were still day, and the represented night were merely a deception. Soret has, unquestionably, surpassed the renowned Victor Hugo, in his 'Midnight.'"

I was pleased at this commendation, and resolved to read the said trilogy, by Soret, as soon as possible. "We possess, in our literature, very few trilogies," remarked I.

"This form," returned Goethe, "is very rare amongst the moderns generally. It sometimes happens that one finds a subject which seems naturally to demand a treatment in three parts; so that in the first there is a sort of introduction, in the second a sort of catastrophe, and in the third a satisfying denouement. In my poem of 'The Youth and the Fair Miller,' these requisites are found, although when I wrote it I by no means thought of making a trilogy. My 'Paria,' also, is a perfect trilogy; and, indeed, it was a trilogy that I intentionally treated this cycle. My 'Trilogie der Leidenschaft' (Trilogy of Passion), as it is called, was, on the contrary, not originally conceived as a trilogy, but became a trilogy gradually, and to a certain extent incidentally. At first, as you know, I had merely the elegy, as an independent poem. Then Madame Szimanowska, who had been at Marienbad with me that summer, visited me, and, by her charming melodies, awoke in me the echo of those youthful happy days. The strophes which I dedicated to this fair friend, are therefore written quite in the metre and tone of the elegy, and suit very well

as a satisfactory conclusion. Then Weygand wished to prepare a new edition of my 'Werther,' and asked me for a preface ; which to me was a very welcome occasion to write 'My Poem to Werther.' But as I had still a remnant of that passion in my heart, the poem as it were formed itself into an introduction to the elegy. Thus it happened that all the three poems which now stand together are pervaded by the same love-sick feeling ; and the 'Trilogie der Leidenschaft' formed itself I knew not how.

"I have advised Soret to write more trilogies ; and, indeed, he should do it as I have described. He should not take the trouble to seek a particular subject for a trilogy, but should rather select, from the rich store of his unprinted poems, one that is especially pregnant with meaning, and, when occasion offers, add a sort of introduction, and conclusion, yet still so that the three productions are separated by a perceptible gap. In this manner one attains one's end far more easily, and spares oneself much thinking, which is notoriously, as Meyer says, a very difficult thing."

We then spoke of Victor Hugo, remarking that his too great fertility had been highly prejudicial to his talent.

"How can a writer help growing worse, and destroying the finest talent in the world," said Goethe, "if he has the audacity to write in a single year two tragedies and a novel ; and further, when he only appears to work in order to scrape together immense sums of money. I do not blame him for trying to become rich, and to earn present renown ; but if he intends to live long in futurity, he must begin to write less and to work more."

Goethe then went through "Marie de Lorme," and endeavoured to make it clear to me that the subject only contained sufficient material to make one single good and really tragical act; but that the author had allowed himself, by considerations of quite a secondary nature, to be misled into stretching out his subject to five long acts. "Under these circumstances," said Goethe, "we have merely the advantage of seeing that the poet is great in the representation of details, which certainly is something, and that no trifle."

Wednesday, December 21, 1831.

Dined with Goethe. We talked of the reason why his "Theory of Colours" had been so little diffused.

"It is very hard to communicate," said he, "for, as you know, it requires not only to be read and studied, but to be *done*, and this is difficult. The laws of poetry and painting may likewise be communicated to a certain extent; but to be a good poet and painter genius is required, which is not to be communicated. To receive a simple, primitive phenomenon, to recognise it in its high significance, and to go to work with it, requires a productive spirit, which is able to take a wide survey, and is a rare gift only to be found in very superior natures.

"And even this is not enough. For, as with every rule, and with all genius, one is yet no painter, but still requires uninterrupted practice, so with the 'Theory of Colours' it is not enough for one to know the chief laws and have a suitable mind, but it is necessary to occupy oneself constantly with the several single phenomena, which are often very

mysterious, and with their deductions and combinations.

“ Thus, for instance, we know well enough the general proposition that a green colour is produced by a mixture of yellow and blue ; but before a person can say that he comprehends the green of the rainbow, or of foliage, or of sea-water, there will be requisite a thorough investigation of the whole region of colour, with a consequent acme of acuteness, which scarcely any one has yet attained.”

After dinner, we looked at some landscapes by Poussin.

“ Those places,” observed Goethe, “ on which the painter throws the principal light, do not admit of detail in the execution ; and therefore water, masses of rock, bare ground, and buildings, are most suitable subjects to bear the principal light. Things, on the contrary, which require more detail in the drawing cannot well be used by the artist in those light places.

“ A landscape-painter,” continued Goethe, “ should possess various sorts of knowledge. It is not enough for him to understand perspective, architecture, and the anatomy of men and animals ; he must also have some insight into botany and mineralogy, that he may know how to express properly the characteristics of trees, plants, and the character of the different sorts of mountains. It is not, indeed, necessary that he should be an accomplished mineralogist, since he has to do chiefly with lime, slate, and sandstone mountains, and only needs know in what forms they lie, how they are acted upon by the atmosphere, and what sort of trees thrive, and are stunted upon them.”

He showed me then some landscapes, by Hermann von Schwanefeld, making various remarks upon the art and personality of that eminent man.

“We find in him,” said he, “art and inclination more completely identified than in any other. He has a deep love for nature, and a divine tranquillity, which communicates itself to us when we look upon his pictures. He was born in the Netherlands, and studied at Rome, under Claude Lorraine. On this master he formed himself to the highest degree of perfection, and developed his fine capacities in the freest manner.”

We looked into an “Artist’s Lexicon,” to see what was said of Hermann von Schwanefeld, and found him censured for not equalling his master.

“The fools!” said Goethe; “Von Schwanefeld was a different man from Claude Lorraine, and the latter could not boast of being the better of the two. If there were nothing more in one’s life than is told by our biographers and lexicon writers, it would be a bad business, not worth the trouble it costs.”

At the close of this, and in the beginning of the next year, Goethe turned again to his favourite studies, the natural sciences. At the suggestion of Boisseree, he occupied himself with deeper inquiries into the laws of the rainbow; and also, from sympathy with the dispute between Cuvier and St. Hilaire, with subjects referring to the metamorphoses of the plant and animal world. He, likewise, revised with me the historical part of the “Theory of Colours,” taking also lively interest in a chapter on the blending of colours, which

I, by his desire, was arranging to be inserted in the theoretical volume.

During this time, there was no lack of interesting conversation between us, or of valuable utterances on his side. But, as he was daily before my eyes, fresh and energetic as ever, I fancied this must always be the case, and was too careless of recording his words till it was too late, and, on the 22nd March 1832, I, with thousands of noble Germans, had to weep for his irreparable loss.

CONVERSATIONS OF GOETHE.

1832.

1832.

(Sup.*) Thursday, January 5, 1832.

Some new pen-and-ink sketches and water-colour drawings had arrived from my friend Töpfer, in Geneva; the greater part of them were views in Switzerland and Italy, which he had collected during his pedestrian tour. Goethe was so much struck with the beauty of the sketches—particularly those in water-colour—that he said it appeared to him as if he were looking at the works of the renowned Lory. I remarked that these were by no means Töpfer's best, and that he could send something very different.

“I do not know what you would have,” returned Goethe. “And what would it be even if something were better! As soon as an artist has attained a certain height of excellence, it is tolerably indifferent whether one of his works turns out a degree more perfect than another. The connoisseur still sees in all the hand of the master, and the whole extent of his talent and his means.”

(Sup.*) Friday, February 17, 1832.

I had sent Goethe a portrait of Dumont, which

had been engraved in England, and which appeared to interest him very much.

“I have repeatedly examined the portrait of this remarkable man,” said Goethe, when I visited him this evening. “At first I found something repulsive in it, which, however, I would have attributed to the treatment of the artist, who had cut the lines a little too deep and hard. But the longer I looked at this highly remarkable head, the more did all hardness disappear, and from the dark ground there came forth a beautiful expression of repose, goodness, and mildness blended with acuteness,* so characteristic of the clever, benevolent man, ever active for the general good, and so refreshing to the mind of the spectator.”

We then spoke further of Dumont; particularly of the memoirs which he wrote with reference to Mirabeau, and in which he reveals the various expedients which Mirabeau had contrived to employ, and also mentions by name many persons of talent whom he had set in motion for his purposes, and with whose powers he had worked.

“I know no more instructive book,” said Goethe, “than these memoirs; by means of which we get an insight into the most secret recesses of that time, and by means of which the wonder Mirabeau becomes natural to us, while, at the same time, the hero loses nothing of his greatness. But now we have the latest critics of the French journals, who think a little differently on this point. These good folks think that the author of these memoirs wants to spoil their

* “Mildness blended with refined acuteness,” is intended as a mere approximation to the untranslatable “Geistreich-feine Milde.”—*Trans.*

Mirabeau, because he unveils the secret of his super-human activity, and allows other people a share in the great merit which, until now, the name of Mirabeau had monopolized.

“The French look upon Mirabeau as their Hercules—and they are perfectly right. But they forget that even the Colossus consists of individual parts, and that even the Hercules of antiquity is a collective being—a great supporter of his own deeds and the deeds of others.

“But, in fact, we are all collective beings, let us place ourselves as we may. For how little *have* we, and *are* we, that we can strictly call our own property? We must all receive and learn both from those who were before us, and from those who are with us. Even the greatest genius would not go far if he tried to owe everything to his own internal self. But many very good men do not comprehend that; and they grope in darkness for half a life, with their dreams of originality. I have known artists who boasted of having followed no master, and of having to thank their own genius for everything. Fools! as if that were possible at all; and as if the world would not force itself upon them at every step, and make something of them in spite of their own stupidity. Yes, I maintain that if such an artist were only to survey the walls of this room, and cast only a passing glance at the sketches of some great masters, with which they are hung, he would necessarily, if he had any genius at all, quit this place another and a higher man. And, indeed, what is there good in us, if it is not the power and the inclination to appropriate to our-

selves the resources of the outward world, and to make them subservient to our higher ends. I may speak of myself, and may modestly say what I feel. It is true that, in my long life, I have done and achieved many things of which I might certainly boast. But to speak the honest truth, what had I that was properly my own, besides the ability and the inclination to see and to hear, to distinguish and to choose, and to enliven with some mind what I had seen and heard, and to reproduce with some degree of skill. I by no means owe my works to my own wisdom alone, but to a thousand things and persons around me, who provided me with material. There were fools and sages, minds enlightened and narrow, childhood, youth, and mature age—all told me what they felt, what they thought, how they lived and worked, and what experiences they had gained ; and I had nothing further to do than to put out my hand and reap what others had sown for me.

“ It is, in fact, utter folly to ask whether a person has anything from himself, or whether he has it from others ; whether he operates by himself, or operates by means of others. The main point is to have a great will, and skill and perseverance to carry it out. All else is indifferent. Mirabeau was therefore perfectly right, when he made what use he could of the outer world and its forces. He possessed the gift of distinguishing talent ; and talent felt itself attracted by the demon of his powerful nature, so that it willingly yielded itself to him and his guidance. Thus he was surrounded by a mass of distinguished forces, which he inspired with his ardour, and set in activity for his own

higher aims. This very peculiarity, that he understood how to act with others and by others,—this was his genius—this was his originality—this was his greatness.”

(Sup.) Sunday, March 11, 1832.

This evening for an hour with Goethe, talking of various interesting subjects. I had bought an English Bible, in which I found, to my great regret, that the apocryphal books were not contained. They had been rejected, because they were not considered genuine and of divine origin. I greatly missed the noble Tobias, that model of a pious life, the Wisdom of Solomon, and Jesus Sirach,—all writings of such high mental and moral elevation, that few others equal them. I spoke to Goethe of my regret at the very narrow view by which some of the writings of the Old Testament are looked upon as immediately proceeding from God; while others, equally excellent, are not so. As if there could be anything noble and great which did not proceed from God, and which was not a fruit of his influence.

“I am thoroughly of your opinion,” returned Goethe. “Still, there are two points of view from which biblical subjects may be contemplated. There is the point of view of a sort of primitive religion, of pure nature and reason, which is of divine origin. This will always be the same, and will last and prevail as long as divinely endowed beings exist. It is, however, only for the elect, and is far too high and noble to become universal. Then there is the point of view of the Church, which is of a more human nature. This is defective and subject to change; but it will last, in a

state of perpetual change, as long as there are weak human beings. The light of unclouded divine revelation is far too pure and brilliant to be suitable and supportable to poor weak man. But the Church steps in as a useful mediator, to soften and to moderate, by which all are helped, and many are benefited. Through the belief that the Christian Church, as the successor of Christ, can remove the burden of human sin, it is a very great power. To maintain themselves in this power and in this importance, and thus to secure the ecclesiastical edifice, is the chief aim of the christian priesthood.

“ This priesthood, therefore, does not so much ask whether this or that book in the Bible greatly enlightens the mind, and contains doctrines of high morality and noble human nature. It rather looks upon the books of Moses, with reference to the fall of man and the origin of a necessity for a Redeemer ; it searches the prophets for repeated allusions to Him, the Expected One, and regards, in the Gospels, His actual earthly appearance, and His death upon the cross, as the atonement for our human sins. You see, therefore, that for such purposes, and weighed in such a balance, neither the noble Tobias, nor the Wisdom of Solomon, nor the sayings of Sirach, can have much weight. Still, with reference to things in the Bible, the question whether they are genuine or spurious is odd enough. What is genuine but that which is truly excellent, which stands in harmony with the purest nature and reason, and which even now ministers to our highest development ! What is spurious but the absurd and the hollow, which brings no fruit—at least,

no good fruit ! If the authenticity of a biblical book is to be decided by the question,—whether something true throughout has been handed down to us, we might on some points doubt the authenticity of the Gospels, since those of Mark and Luke were not written from immediate presence and experience, but, according to oral tradition, long afterwards ; and the last, by the disciple John, was not written till he was of a very advanced age. Nevertheless, I look upon all the four Gospels as thoroughly genuine ; for there is in them the reflection of a greatness which emanated from the person of Jesus, and which was of as divine a kind as ever was seen upon earth. If I am asked whether it is in my nature to pay Him devout reverence, I say—certainly ! I bow before Him as the divine manifestation of the highest principle of morality. If I am asked whether it is in my nature to revere the Sun, I again say—certainly ! For he is likewise a manifestation of the highest Being, and indeed the most powerful which we children of earth are allowed to behold. I adore in him the light and the productive power of God ; by which we all live, move, and have our being—we, and all the plants and animals with us. But if I am asked—whether I am inclined to bow before a thumb-bone of the apostle Peter or Paul, I say—‘ Spare me, and stand off with your absurdities ! ’

“ ‘ Quench not the spirit,’ says the Apostle. There are many absurdities in the propositions of the Church ; nevertheless, rule it will, and so it must have a narrow-minded multitude, which bows its head and likes to be ruled. The high and richly-endowed clergy dread nothing more than the enlightenment of the

lower orders. They withheld the Bible from them as long as it was possible. Besides, what can a poor member of the Christian Church think of the princely magnificence of a richly-endowed bishop, when he sees in the Gospels the poverty and indigence of Christ, who, with his disciples, travelled humbly on foot, whilst the princely bishop rattles along in his carriage drawn by six horses !”

“ We scarcely know,” continued Goethe, “ what we owe to Luther, and the Reformation in general. We are freed from the fetters of spiritual narrow-mindedness ; we have, in consequence of our increasing culture, become capable of turning back to the fountain head, and of comprehending Christianity in its purity. We have, again, the courage to stand with firm feet upon God’s earth, and to feel ourselves in our divinely-endowed human nature. Let mental culture go on advancing, let the natural sciences go on gaining in depth and breadth, and the human mind expand as it may, it will never go beyond the elevation and moral culture of Christianity as it glistens and shines forth in the Gospel !

“ But the better we Protestants advance in our noble development, so much the more rapidly will the Catholics follow us. As soon as they feel themselves caught up by the ever-extending enlightenment of the time, they must go on, do what they will, till at last the point is reached where all is but one.

“ The mischievous sectarianism of the Protestants will also cease, and with it the hatred and hostile feeling between father and son, sister and brother ; for as soon as the pure doctrine and love of Christ are com-

prehended in their true nature, and have become a vital principle, we shall feel ourselves as human beings, great and free, and not attach especial importance to a degree more or less in the outward forms of religion. Besides, we shall all gradually advance from a Christianity of words and faith, to a Christianity of feeling and action."

The conversation turned upon the great men who had lived before Christ, among the Chinese, the Indians, the Persians, and the Greeks; and it was remarked, that the divine power had been as operative in them as in some of the great Jews of the Old Testament. We then came to the question how far God influenced the great natures of the present world in which we live?

"To hear people speak," said Goethe, "one would almost believe that they were of opinion that God had withdrawn into silence since those old times, and that man was now placed quite upon his own feet, and had to see how he could get on without God, and his daily invisible breath. In religious and moral matters, a divine influence is indeed still allowed, but in matters of science and art it is believed that they are merely earthy, and nothing but the product of human powers.

"Let any one only try, with human will and human power, to produce something which may be compared with the creations that bear the names of *Mozart*, *Raphael*, or *Shakspeare*. I know very well that these three noble beings are not the only ones, and that in every province of art innumerable excellent geniuses have operated, who have produced things as perfectly

good as those just mentioned. But if they were as great as those, they rose above ordinary human nature, and in the same proportion were as divinely endowed as they.

“And after all what does it all come to? God did not retire to rest after the well-known six days of creation, but, on the contrary, is constantly active as on the first. It would have been for Him a poor occupation to compose this heavy world out of simple elements, and to keep it rolling in the sunbeams from year to year, if he had not had the plan of founding a nursery for a world of spirits upon this material basis. So he is now constantly active in higher natures to attract the lower ones.”

Goethe was silent. But I cherished his great and good words in my heart.

Early in March 1832.*

Goethe mentioned at table that he had received a visit from Baron Carl Von Spiegel, and that he had been pleased with him beyond measure.

“He is a very fine young man,” said Goethe; “in his mien and manners he has something by which the nobleman is seen at once. He could as little dissemble his descent as any one could deny a higher intellect; for birth and intellect both give to him who once possesses them a stamp which no incognito can conceal. Like beauty, these are powers which one cannot approach without feeling that they are of a higher nature.”

* In the original book this conversation follows immediately the one of December 21, 1831, and with the remainder of the book is prefaced thus:—“The following I noted down shortly afterwards (that is, after they took place) from memory.”—*Trans.*

Some days later.

We talked of the tragic idea of Destiny among the Greeks.

"It no longer suits our way of thinking," said Goethe; "it is obsolete, and is also in contradiction with our religious views. If a modern poet introduces such antique ideas into a drama, it always has an air of affectation. It is a costume which is long since out of fashion, and which, like the Roman toga, no longer suits us.

"It is better for us moderns to say with Napoleon, 'Politics are Destiny.' But let us beware of saying, with our latest literati, that politics are poetry, or a suitable subject for the poet. The English poet Thomson wrote a very good poem on the Seasons, but a very bad one on Liberty, and that not from want of poetry in the poet, but from want of poetry in the subject."

"If a poet would work politically, he must give himself up to a party; and so soon as he does that, he is lost as a poet; he must bid farewell to his free spirit, his unbiassed view, and draw over his ears the cap of bigotry and blind hatred.

"The poet, as a man and citizen, will love his native land; but the native land of his *poetic* powers and poetic action is the good, noble, and beautiful, which is confined to no particular province or country, and which he seizes upon and forms wherever he finds it. Therein is he like the eagle, who hovers with free gaze over whole countries, and to whom it is of no consequence whether the hare on which he pounces is running in Prussia or in Saxony.

“And, then, what is meant by love of one’s country? what is meant by patriotic deeds? If the poet has employed a life in battling with pernicious prejudices, in setting aside narrow views, in enlightening the minds, purifying the tastes, ennobling the feelings and thoughts of his countrymen, what better could he have done? how could he have acted more patriotically?”

“To make such ungrateful and unsuitable demands upon a poet is just as if one required the captain of a regiment to show himself a patriot, by taking part in political innovations, and thus neglect his proper calling. The captain’s country is his regiment, and he will show himself an excellent patriot by troubling himself about political matters only so far as they concern him, and bestowing all his mind and all his care on the battalions under him, trying so to train and discipline them, that they may do their duty if ever their native land should be in peril.

“I hate all bungling like sin; but, most of all, bungling in state-affairs, which produces nothing but mischief to thousands and millions.

“You know that, on the whole, I care little what is written about me; but yet it comes to my ears, and I know well enough that, hard as I have toiled all my life, all my labours are as nothing in the eyes of certain people, just because I have disdained to mingle in political parties. To please such people I must have become a member of a Jacobin club, and preached bloodshed and murder. However, not a word more upon this wretched subject, lest I become unwise in railing against folly.”

In the same manner he blamed the political course, so much praised by others, of Uhland.

“Mind,” said he, “the politician will devour the poet. To be a member of the States, and to live amid daily jostlings and excitements, is not for the delicate nature of a poet. His song will cease, and that is in some sort to be lamented. Swabia has plenty of men, sufficiently well educated, well meaning, able, and eloquent, to be members of the States, but only one poet of Uhland’s class.”

The last stranger whom Goethe entertained as his guest, was the eldest son of Frau von Arnim ; the last words he wrote were some verses in the album of this young friend.

The morning after Goethe’s death, a deep desire seized me to look once again upon his earthly garment. His faithful servant, Frederic, opened for me the chamber in which he was laid out. Stretched upon his back, he reposed as if asleep ; profound peace and security reigned in the features of his sublimely noble countenance. The mighty brow seemed yet to harbour thoughts. I wished for a lock of his hair ; but reverence prevented me from cutting it off. The body lay naked, only wrapped in a white sheet ; large pieces of ice had been placed near it, to keep it fresh as long as possible. Frederic drew aside the sheet, and I was astonished at the divine magnificence of the limbs. The breast was powerful, broad, and arched ; the arms and thighs were full, and softly muscular ; the feet were elegant, and of the most perfect shape ; nowhere,

on the whole body, was there a trace either of fat or of leanness and decay. A perfect man lay in great beauty before me; and the rapture which the sight caused made me forget for a moment that the immortal spirit had left such an abode. I laid my hand on his heart—there was a deep silence—and I turned away to give free vent to my suppressed tears.

THE END.

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ERRATA.

Vol. ii. p. 302, in lines 6 and 4 from the bottom, *read* Geneva
for Genoa, and *vice versa*.

” ” p. 336, note, *for* personalität *read* persönlichkeit.

Author Goethe, Johann Wolfgang

Title Conversations of Goethe with
Soret; tr. by Oxenford.

DATE

24/1/42

NAME

W. R. R. R.

Jan 6/58

D. Stephen

